

A GRAIN OF MADNESS

LIDA A. CHURCHILL



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A
Grain of Madness

A ROMANCE

✓ BY
LIDA A. CHURCHILL

AUTHOR OF
"The Magic Seven," etc.

35
He who is not born with a grain of madness in his composition
is disinherited by heaven. He will be neither poetic nor artistic,
nor victorious, nor amorous, nor young.

ARSENE HOUSSAYE.

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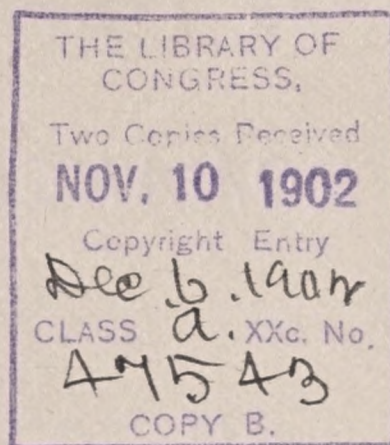
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TO
THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN ME,
AND
BY THEIR BELIEF HAVE
IN SO LARGE A MEASURE MADE IT POSSIBLE,
THIS BOOK
IS
DEDICATED WITH GRATEFUL LOVE,
BY
THE AUTHOR.

A GRAIN OF MADNESS.

I.

SHOOTING STARS.

How the world is made for each of us!
How all we perceive and know in it
Tends to some moment's product thus,
When a soul declare itself—to-wit
By its fruit, the thing it does.

—BROWNING.

“How many women are in the world, Father Alpheus?”

“Two; two women,” answered the priest absently, as he shaded his eyes with his hand and looked out to where the *White Heron*, a mere speck in the distance, was dipping her bows rather deeply in the high running waves.

“Two!” exclaimed the boy. “Why, *I* know more than two. There’s Hetty, and Phyllis, and Jetsam—though Jetsam’s only a play-woman yet—and Miss Trescott——”

“Peace, boy,” said Father Alpheus, lowering his hand. “Did I say two? How should I know how many women are in the world? You are a strange lad, and your questions are strange.”

"Two. He spoke like an inamorito with a pair of sweethearts," said Vancourt, one hand holding his hat, the other thrust into the pocket of his gray woolen trousers.

"Mr. Vancourt, what is an inamorito?" asked Flotsam, looking up into the face of the artist.

"An inamorito," replied Vancourt, "is a lunatic who thinks he is happy a quarter of the time, and knows he is miserable the other three-quarters."

"Then why is one ever that kind of a thing at all?" gravely queried the lad.

"Ah, that's a question I have never been able to answer," was Vancourt's reply.

But Flotsam seemed to have lost interest in the subject and remarked, as he still gazed into the face of the artist:

"My grandpa and I are reading something called evolution; how folks sprang from the lower animals, and, do you know, I think you were a lion one time? You look ever so much like one, and your voice is big, and heavy, and growly."

Vancourt laughed in a way that certainly might have suggested a roar, and said:

"*You* reading evolution! Such stuff! You should have Mother Goose and the Arabian Nights for literary food. What is Herr Lessing thinking of, I wonder?"

"O, of so many things!" said the boy. "And I like to talk with him of most of them, but I like best to hear him read about the gods and the fairies and

nymphs. The world must have been so interesting once."

But now the *White Heron* was nearing the tiny wharf, and Vancourt did not answer.

The boat was brought close to the landing, and Father Alpheus and the boy stood by while the artist assisted Miss Trescott to alight.

The young woman went straight to the priest and greeted him warmly.

"You are kind to come so often to meet me," she said.

"I thought the storm of last night might prevent your putting off," said Father Alpheus. "I knew there would be a heavy sea this morning. If you did make an attempt to come I wished to see you safely on shore."

"So good of you," said Miss Trescott. "And you, Flotsam. I wonder if the grotto will be too cool for your thin dress now that the air has been made so much keener by the storm."

"Ah, no," replied the lad. "It has been so warm, you know, even in the shade. I shall be sure to like the coolness."

Father Alpheus said good morning and turned away, and his three companions set out for the woods.

It would be hard to select four people more dissimilar in appearance than those who met on the sands that summer morning.

Father Alpheus, priest in three straggling hamlets which adjoined each other, tall and ascetic looking, with piercing hazel eyes, and hair of that drab hue

produced by the union of black and gray, his manner nervously grave, his look intent, his mouth thin-lipped and sensitive. His voice was low and vibrant, and one accustomed to analyze voices would have detected in it a passionate note. Perhaps no single word would have so accurately described this man and his manner as the adjective intense.

Looking at Allan Vancourt one could but acknowledge the truth of the statement that he resembled a lion. Broad of shoulder, massive of frame, his heavy, straggling hair a dusky red, his thick, full beard a lighter shade of red, his face broad, his mouth straight-lined and firm, his eyes nearer yellow than blue; the whole massive countenance being capable of hardening into a cold sternness, or breaking into a slow, spreading smile. The lad had not erred in pronouncing his voice big and heavy and growly.

An English artist hiding from his honors was Allan Vancourt. He had produced several pictures which were pronounced masterpieces. All London united in declaring that this young man would add one more name to the long list of England's geniuses, and the proudest and most exclusive flung open their doors and bade him enter. But having no affinity with the things of society, he one day tossed the numerous cards of invitation which lay on his table—many of them unread—into the waste basket, packed a few articles and his painting materials, and took passage on the next American-bound steamer. After landing he wandered about until on the coast of New England he found a little hidden village, ocean-washed on one side, on the

other stretching away into a lovely desolation of forests and glens—a place of flashing brooks and woodland retreats where the trees met overhead, and the squirrels and birds were too unaccustomed to man to fear him.

“Surely one may reasonably hope to be left alone here,” ruminated the artist, and forthwith engaged board at a farmhouse on the outskirts of the little village. Day after day he sketched and painted, or sat for hours upon the grass or some fallen tree, smoking, dreaming and thanking his stars that his lines had fallen in pleasant places.

There was one person, however, who was welcomed by Vancourt during his ramblings or restings.

One day after a heavy storm he had wandered down to the shore. Just as a huge wave had broken on the sand, there started up at his feet, as though washed ashore by the plunging breaker, a boy and a girl. Vancourt’s surprised eyes rested on the two, and his artist judgment could not but be favorable unto them.

From one of the most beautiful faces ever bestowed by the gods upon a favorite, the boy pushed back a mass of silky brown curls which the breeze had blown wildly about, and looked at the stranger with eyes of the loveliest blue. His forehead and throat, as well as the feet and ankles, which showed so fair against the wet sand, were white as pure ivory. His form was slim and erect, and shapely as a chiseled thing. He wore short blue trousers, fastened at the knee, and a loose tunic of the same texture and color.

The girl, though far less beautiful, was still attrac-

tive, with her olive skin, black hair, and dusky, brooding eyes. Her bare brown limbs were somewhat less graceful than were the lad's, and her gaze less open than his.

She wore the same blue cloth fashioned into a short skirt, and a sort of blouse.

The two were drenched and a little frightened. They had raced in before the high wave, but not fast enough to prevent their being generously splashed by it.

"Will you specimens of human driftwood explain from what shore you were washed into the sea?" asked Vancourt.

"It was swifter than we thought," said the boy with a little shiver, glancing at the water, without answering Vancourt.

"Have you sea children names?" was the artist's next inquiry.

"Ah, yes," said the boy. "Mine is François Ernest——"

Vancourt interrupted by a wave of the hand.

"Don't tell me. I am not good at remembering names. You will be simply Flotsam and Jetsam to me if we meet again, as I hope we shall, for I like you well."

"But we were not washed in by the sea," said the girl soberly. "We live with Herr Lessing, in the cottage yonder. He is our grandfather. He says that my brother is French, like our father, but that I am German, as our mother was, though somehow we have changed complexions. The brother knows much,

and studies well, but he is light of heart and of tongue, grandpa says, and his fancies make havoc with facts."

The artist met the children several times, and between him and the lad there grew up a close intimacy; an intimacy which the sister did not share, being more than half afraid of Vancourt. At almost any hour of the day when the boy's study hours were over, or had not begun, the curiously contrasted pair might be seen together.

A kind of intimacy had also sprung up between Father Alpheus and the artist. The former had been kind to Vancourt in the way which a resident member of a place may be to a transient sojourner, sometimes lending him books, directing him to places where good sketches could be obtained, and occasionally inviting him to a meal at his house.

It was not a pleasant communication nor a welcome request that the priest made to him one evening after the two had taken tea together. Father Alpheus explained that he had arranged for the daughter of an old and valued friend to board on the island two miles away, with some parishioners of his, and to come over to the mainland to sketch. Would it be asking too much of Vancourt, who knew all the latest methods in painting, that he would give Miss Trescott an occasional word of advice concerning her work? She possessed a strong artistic temperament, but had, with the exception of the last year, when she had been studying in New York, lived in the West, away from artists and works of art. She would not intrude upon him. She was wholly devoted to, absorbed in, her art.

Vancourt resisted the temptation to say that he never

wished to meet the young woman, and should probably not remain long after her advent, and replied courteously that if, in return for all the kindnesses he had received at the hands of the priest, he could give Miss Trescott a word of counsel now and then, he should be glad to do so.

Father Alpheus had introduced the young man and woman to each other ten days before the morning meeting on the sands.

They had not seen much of each other during those ten days. They had sought different places in which to sketch, and as yet Vancourt had not been afforded an opportunity to speak a word of that counsel which the priest had solicited.

They had come together accidentally two days before our introduction of the group, and Miss Trescott, who had seen and admired Flotsam, had declared that she would like to paint him as Cupid among the ferns if she could find the right setting for the picture. Vancourt knew just the spot for such a sketch, and had conducted her and the boy to it. He had assisted in placing the model, and had wandered about within easy distance while the less experienced artist had made her first sketch. On their way back to the village the two had contrived another way in which the lad, who delighted to be used as a model, might be posed, and on the morning on which we first meet them Vancourt and the boy were waiting to accompany Miss Trescott to the woods.

Among a group of ordinary girls Helen Trescott would have appeared as a rose among dandelions.

Frank, generous, impulsive, she yet never lost an air of aloofness. With a pride too genuine to become haughtiness, too really aristocratic to be obliged to assume exclusiveness, she created for herself a select atmosphere in which only congenial souls could freely breathe. Those who understood her knew that her inherent fineness would ever be a shield against the world's rudeness or humiliations. Coarseness found no way of approach to her. One could imagine the fine fervor with which she would love or hate, and feel that her tenderness would be of a more exquisite flavor than that of one whose nature was keyed to more neutral tones. Those who pronounced her face, with its irregular features and imperfect contour, beautiful, seldom knew the reason for their verdict, but others, wiser in finding causes for their preferences, were aware that the swift play and expression, the instantaneous illuminations and changes of the countenance, lent it charm. Her hair was yellow, her blue eyes wide open and eager, her figure slight with a swaying sort of grace, her step springy and light.

"Why did I come to New York?" she was saying to Vancourt in her finely modulated voice as the trio went up the pebbly path and along the upland meadows. "I think it was the shooting stars that determined my course. You know the superstition that if one wishes while a star is falling he will get his wish. Perhaps you remember what showers of stars fell some year and a half ago? Why, it appeared to rain stars. It seemed as though the sky must miss them, so many deserted it. Night after night I

watched them, and repeated over and over my wish; the wish that I might be shown where and how to begin to do with some degree of intelligence the work which was set for me. Somehow the meteors all seemed to shoot eastward, and just then, as though in answer to my wishes—which were really importunate prayers—came a New York paper to my mother in which a well known artist was spoken of as being willing to receive a few pupils. I decided to follow the direction of the shooting stars, and to put myself under his tuition.

“My mother, with Auntie for companion, and her books and flowers, can live in our drowsy western home, but I was always like the starling which wanted to ‘get out.’ Mother was a little frightened at the thought of my going so far away, but I obtained her consent to visit New York, and finally to remain there and study. And so I have been there for a year, and now, by the advice of Father Alpheus, I am here.”

“There to what purpose? Here to what end?” growled Vancourt. “Are you a painter or a dauber, I wonder. What did you want? What would you sacrifice for Art?”

He stopped as he ceased speaking, and fixed his eyes upon Miss Trescott. Also standing still, and looking her questioner in the face, Helen Trescott said:

“I was obliged to come away. I had to find out whether I was a dauber or a painter. The voice which called me was as real as that which spoke to Samuel. What would I sacrifice for Art? Sometimes I could not sacrifice anything, for all I could bring, life, liberty,

joy, love, would be a free and grateful offering of thanksgiving that she had elected me among her votaries. I cannot tell anyone—I never tried before—what I feel when this mania is upon me. I do not long for fame, for money, for place, but just to feel that I have created a picture which shall be to me a supreme Utterance. If ever beneath my brush there shall appear that of which I can say, This is I; my Life is on the canvas; my Soul has portrayed itself, those who will may commend, and those who will may withhold their praise; I shall be satisfied.”

Allan Vancourt lifted his hat in his left hand and held out his right to Miss Trescott.

“I understand,” he said. “You have entered with reverent feet the Holy of Holies. Art has elected you one of the Inner Circle. You are among the Inspired.”

Miss Trescott did not take the outstretched hand.

“Not yet,” she said somewhat sadly. “Having told you so much I must tell you more. It is a strange fact”—as she spoke she lifted her eyes which had dropped, with a half appealing look to his face—“that I go out from the Holy of Holies; that I sometimes actually recoil from the idea of being an artist. At such times I long to do anything rather than to handle a brush. I cannot explain this feeling, or tell you how it troubles me. Sometimes it seems to me that I am not a *born* painter, for until I was fourteen I never thought about doing anything but a little sketching and occasional flower painting. It was Father Alpheus, who stopped on his way from Denver to pay my mother a brief

visit, who first fired my imagination about painting. From that time there grew to be two Helen Trescotts; Helen Trescott the artist, alone with her soul and her work, earnest, aspiring, absorbed, and the woman who would fling aside all absorption in anything, all restraint, and be free as air, *en rapport* with all the gay, glad things of the world. But the artist is the woman that remains. It is her life I live. You are one of the people whom I should not wish to deceive. I could not let you think me reverent towards, and worthy of, Art all the time."

Vancourt again put out his hand.

"With Helen Trescott, the artist," he said. "With the woman that remains."

II.

A PARTING OF WAYS.

Take heed lest passion sway
Thy judgment to do aught which else free will
Would not admit.

—MILTON.

A carnival of color; a reign of crimson and gold. Flash upon flash of quivering light, and then a swift decline into ashy grayness which becomes a dense, angry purple.

The sun had set.

Two people had watched its going down with never a word. When the purple had complete sway the girl turned to her companion, and said, as though resuming an interrupted conversation:

“To what profit could this knowledge be bruited abroad? For my sake? What could it gain for me? Love? I have it already. Marriage? Marriage with a man who would turn from his nobler instincts, and trail his lifelong purpose, a dishonored thing, in the dust. And for what? Will men understand? Will they seek for motives, allow for temptations, weigh principles? Never! They will point to you as one who has proved that man’s vows go for little; that the virtue of a priest is inviolate only so long as it is not

combated by desire; that his robe is a cloak of sin, his surplice the garment of a sensualist.

“And as for me? Shall I be honored, or at least spoken of as one who for love’s sake forgot all but love, but who for constancy’s sake may still be called a pure woman? Has the world changed in a few short months? Changed because we have come to be among those who might wish to count upon its justice and lean upon its mercy? The answer is too certain. You would be the priest who dishonored yourself and your order, and added to the dishonor of the whole world; withal, one who would put aside his panoply of character, his real vocation in life, for that which could never satisfy him or the one for whose sake the sacrifice would be chiefly made. Nothing would be adjusted. A wrong would be done.

“But the constantly lived lie! The eating of the bread to my sure damnation, the drinking of the wine to my everlasting shame!”

“And who formed the creed, and fixed the decree which would make your priest’s life a lie? God, or man? Would it not be a greater lie for you to declare by a hampered life and hindered usefulness that you were no longer fit for the work whereunto you were sent? It is not God’s law, but man’s rule, which would set between you and your heaven-appointed life-work a moment of hated passion, an hour of loathed sin. You can by a life of toil with the weapons which you best know how to use, atone for that which was evil. Tell the world of that madness which overtook you like a whirlwind, and bore you down as the wind bears

down the tall grain, and man's hand will wrench from you your weapons, man's decree forbid God's dictates, and you will turn your back on your Maker that you may honor the commands of His creature. Broken on the wheel of circumstance, wrecked by a decision ready-made and forced to fit all cases, but utterly unadjustable to your own, you will make your life a useless thing, disobey the instinct which is the voice of heaven, and die as the fool dieth."

The man would have spoken, but she silenced him with a gesture, and went on:

"If any human will but your own should dictate to you, any human decision sway you, mine should be that will, that decision. By the most sacred thing vouchsafed to woman I have bought your obedience. I have given you too abundantly of that which is above price. I have paid heavily for the right to be your judge. I claim that right. Hear, and understand me. Cast aside your priest's robe to-morrow; proclaim to all the world our sin, and I will still refuse to marry you. I will never bear your name; your child shall never bear your name. God will not hold you in disgrace. He wipes out the sins of other men as he did those of David, who was once a criminal. I bid you be silent. Silence is sometimes heaven's speech. If there is sin in this be it upon my soul, for I will have all things as I have said."

"And I," groaned the man, "on whom the retribution should fall, must be free to carry out my desire, to walk in my chosen way, leaving you to bear alone the pain, the burden, the disgrace which must result

from my act! This you command. How can I obey you?"

"To bear the thing I choose to bear, to walk in my elected way. The thing I could not bear would be *your* disgrace, *your* humiliation. Every taunt against you would sting me like a point of flame, every jeer hurled after you drive me mad. I can suffer for one; I could not suffer for two if you were one of the two."

"Ah, but how surely is God not mocked! The disgrace, the humiliation, the eternal jeer which you refuse for me from the world must come from within, lashing and torturing me forever. No confession to man, no absolution; nothing but remorse; if possible expiation by penance and good deeds."

"Cast no remorseful looks behind you," cried the woman. "Heaven forgives and makes new beginnings. It is man who remembers to torture. Work is sacrament, service religion. You shall know of me and that which betides me. I shall write when I am away from here; write under another name. Remember I am not sorry that I loved you. I shall always love you. Good-bye."

It was quite dark. The man put out his hand as though he would place it upon her head in priestly blessing, and let his last act, at least, be free from passion, but the raised hand clenched itself, then the fingers unclosed, and with a swift, strong movement the girl was gathered to his heart, with a burning vehemence his kisses fell on her lips, her forehead, her eyes, her hair, and with a groan she was released.

With a staggering motion the man went down the

hill, and the woman, pausing a moment as though to gather strength, walked rapidly along the path to a small house in the valley.

Sitting alone in the darkness the man knew that he had pleaded to bear a thing which he never could have borne. He had, nevertheless, been sincere in his pleading. He had wished to pit his strength of character against a world's strength of scorn; he had meant to prove his nobility by acknowledging that which would brand him as ignoble; but now that the striving of the spirit of self-sacrifice was removed, now that honor instead of bidding him speak commanded him to be silent, he knew that the fight into which he would have entered would have demanded stronger weapons than he could have mustered, an endurance which he could not bring to it. His whole frame trembled as he thought of the finger-pointing of men; the perspiration stood upon his forehead when imagination showed him looks of curiosity and the smile which was half a sneer on the lips of those who wholly despised him while half condoning his weakness. Had pointed bayonets flashed in front of him, and the thunder of cannon deafened him, he could sooner have faced the one and stood unshrinkingly before the expected balls of the other than have moved among those who pitied or thought ill of him. He would have attempted the latter course for honor's sake; he would have played his part miserably, and he knew it, and the knowledge was a sharp reproach. She could bear so much for him! He could bear nothing for her. And yet he would have gone

down to the dust trying for her sake, for love's sake, for honor's sake.

This was his consolation.

His sense of justice was at war with his knowledge of his weakness. He bitterly blamed himself for not possessing that which had never been given him.

The dark hours went by. The gray dawn broke and found him still on the hillside. He had planned his expiation. His feet should be turned in a direction in which those of an erring man should go. His silence should indeed be heaven's speech.

It was a matter of great surprise to the diocese when the young aspirant for holy orders whose intellect most quickly grasped and readily formulated abstruse subjects, whose towering ambition had been a source of anxiety to his confessors, asked to be sent to the humblest field which could be given him, to work among people too poor to give gifts or to afford aught save the barest pittance, where hard work and much care might be expected; but the young priest gave no reason for his change of mind and choice of work, and his devout friends thanked heaven for the evident change in a heart which they could not know was well nigh breaking, and gave him his way.

III.

FOOL, OR PHILOSOPHER?

My life is for itself, and not for a spectacle. It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

—EMERSON.

Robert Trescott smiled at the remark, which was frequently made, that his little daughter was like him; that the hair of father and child must have been spun from the same thread.

"Ay, spun from the same thread likely enough," he would answer, "though perhaps not woven by the same loom. The right things get together. They cannot help it. It is spiritual magnetism. People are not obliged to have the same blood in their veins to be related. Many who are born of the same parents are strangers. My own are those to whom I am divinely related; whom I claim by inevitable laws."

No one of his simple-minded neighbors pretended to understand the young man who talked in riddles, and each one shared the opinion of the village post master, who declared that "Mr. Trescott was either mighty foolish or mighty deep."

But it was a pleasant thing, that smile of Robert Trescott's, and people liked to call it forth, and the resemblance between himself and wee Helen was often remarked. The speaker of riddles was glad for the words and for the facts which made them possible; glad for the yellow hair which grew alike on the head of the child and his own; glad for the blue in both his own eyes and hers; glad that people noticed and commented upon tricks of manner and peculiarities of speech, which, without reasoning of resemblances which association may produce, they pronounced like his.

"Her father's own child," the frequent observation ran.

"Truly, her father's own child," young Trescott would agree, while his smile would deepen a little, and his voice sink into a low tone as he added:

"That is ours which we receive as a gift equally with that which we create. Her father's own child, in very truth."

The thoughts and beliefs of this tiller of the soil refused to run in accustomed channels. He seemed one of Nature's negative poles. That which people in general attracted to themselves, he, for the most part, repelled. He set up between himself and many sorrows and annoyances which men make vital unto themselves by appropriating them, a reasoning which by the few who grasped it at all, was branded as imbecility or praised as philosophy, according to the understanding or misunderstanding of those who listened to it.

He changed circumstances by regarding them in a new light, crowded out traditional doctrines by adopting creeds of his own. That which to his mind had never been given to him he refused to acknowledge as his. He suffered the forging of no connecting links between himself and any disintegrating or unquieting thing with which he saw no necessity for near relations.

When, with all the eloquence which passionate love could inspire, he urged the woman who in a month from the time when he first met her became his wife, to marry him, he refused in masterful but kindly stubbornness to be answered negatively if only vague reasons could be given for the refusal. The girl, obeying some impulse which she never understood, told him a secret which would have sent most men from her with the haste of those who flee for a cause grave enough to remain undiscussed, but this man said with simple conviction:

"This does not necessarily touch me. I love you. I want you. How could I be worthy of you if I did not care enough for you to stay by you all the closer because you need me? Another man's child? Why not mine if I make it so? Why need I manufacture darts with which to pierce myself? You do not love me? I wish it were otherwise, but I prefer spending my life trying to teach you to do so than away from you. And could I leave you alone to suffer because you have no passion for me? That would be loving myself and my fancied dignity more than you."

The two were married. The date of that marriage

was never known in the far West where the young man, who had inherited a considerable fortune from his uncle, purchased a farm.

When the child was born a sister of Mrs. Trescott's was summoned from the East, and continued to live in the Trescott home.

In every community there is a royal family; one to which homage is involuntarily paid and unquestioningly given; one by which such homage is unconsciously demanded and unsurprisedly received. This giving is an unuttered recognition of uncrowned royalty, an unconscious tribute to superiority.

The Trescotts were the royal family in the neighborhood in which they lived. Gathering about them without effort all that was fine, repudiating without conscious renunciation all that was coarse, they were the center and perfection of refined civilization to their less cultivated neighbors.

Helen remained at home, taught by her mother, but possessing from early childhood a keen delight in life in all its phases. The city with its myriad activities was less a wonder than a delight to her. She was often allowed to visit it in company with some member of the family, and while she was yet small enough to stand on the cushions of the railway carriage and look out of the window, she would gaze back at the lights of the town which she was leaving with longing regretfulness and many questions as to when she should see them again.

When she was eleven Robert Trescott died, leaving his wife possessed of all his property. On his dying

bed he made a request, and received two solemn promises.

He spoke of a cousin, Archibald Trescott, the only child of the uncle who had made his nephew Robert, rather than his son, his heir.

This son had perhaps not been worse than most young men, but the father had been sterner and more unyielding than most fathers, and when reproofs and threats proved as unavailing as reasonings and expostulations had done, Archie was forbidden to enter, except as a reformed character, his father's house. Possessing the pride if not the morality of his sire, the young man disappeared immediately after the edict of his conditional banishment, and was seen no more in the vicinity of his former home. After seven years' absence his name appeared in the list of those who went down on a steamer bound to Liverpool. When Robert Trescott, who was a lad of fourteen when his cousin went away, was twenty-one he came into possession of the estate which Archie would naturally have inherited.

When the dying man had spoken of these things to his wife and Helen, who stood by her mother's side, he said :

"Whether Archie married I have no means of knowing, but if either of you ever meet one who belonged to him I charge you to receive that one as I would have received him, to care for him as I would have cared."

"I will receive him as you have received my child. I will care for him as you have cared for her."

This was the wife's reply. The maiden with the

awed face and intent eyes who stood beside her mother, laid her head on the pillow, where her tresses mingled with the locks so like her own, and with all the earnestness of her young soul promised to do all that one might for this unknown, perhaps non-existent person for whom Robert Trescott and the dead prodigal might have cared.

"May he live again in his child," said one who had been fond of young Trescott, and Mrs. Trescott, remembering the generosity which had shielded her, the strength which had upheld her, the thoughtfulness which had made her its object; remembering, too, something which the speaker never knew, repeated fervently with an unnoticed change of one word.

"May he live again in the child!"

The Trescotts saw but little company after the death of the farmer. Without discourtesy or want of interest, Mrs. Trescott had that in her manner which forbade intimacy. The first to relieve want or to sympathize with sorrow, she nevertheless lived in an atmosphere of her own which was exclusive without rudeness, prohibitive without haughtiness. Her manner was not so much that of one who would bar others out as of one who would shut herself in. Calm and cheerful, she yet impressed one with a belief of passion held in leash; speaking softly and easily, she yet suggested the idea of suppressed force; quietly busy with book or needlework or the superintendence of household affairs, she yet caused one to wonder how she could be occupied with these things. As a kind if abstracted wife, a gentle if something less than tender mother; a

thoughtful if not always companionable sister and friend, she was esteemed, revered, referred to, but, after her husband's death, left very much alone.

One day when she had been three years a widow she summoned Helen to the drawing-room that she might introduce to her an old friend, an Eastern priest who, en route from the extreme West, where some imperative clerical duty had called him, paid a two-hours' visit to the farm.

The child wondered if all priests were as kind as this one, who was so interested in her studies, so solicitous for her future, so anxious about her tastes and habits. She remembered Robert Trescott's words that those are ours to whom we are divinely related. Though only partially understanding the meaning of the words, she vaguely felt their force, and that they were applicable in the case of her mother's friend.

After the departure of the priest, whose blessing seemed so solemn to her, she stole to her mother's side with the question :

"Is he not divinely related? Is he not ours?"

A strange light was in the mother's eyes as she answered :

"He is indeed related. He is ours,"

"Our very own?" questioned the child with eager persistence.

The strange look remained on the mother's face as she answered :

"Our own, my daughter, our very own."

IV.

THE TRAGEDY OF SILENCE.

Thy prayers are as clouds in a drought; regardless, unfruitful,
they roll;
For this, that thou prayest vain things, 'tis a far cry to
Heaven, my soul,
Oh, a far cry to Heaven!

—EDITH THOMAS.

“My God! and this is life! We strive, with sweating brows and aching limbs, for bread that hunger may not consume us; we struggle in the water, and battle with the storm, and die a hundred mental deaths, and dare a thousand spiritual agonies, that breath may remain to us; that we may say with lying lips, ‘We live.’ Oh, foolish adoration of existence! Oh, short sighted love of life! Would not the wise man welcome oblivion as the maid welcomes her lover? Would not he who has understanding hasten by every means the falling of the curtain which shuts him in with darkness and peace?

“Oh, crushing weight of atonement! An hour’s delirium, the madness of a moment, and a human heart must starve forever because it took too readily that which it craved! Its cry for love must be answered by mockeries; its outstretched hands, trembling with their

longing to feel the clasp of other hands, must meet empty air, and know that for them there must be no responsive pressure, no answering thrill. The sea may sing on forever to those who wander mated by her shores, and two may watch her waves together, and be glad, but a man who sinned for one hour must wander forever on the shore unattended! So much tenderness in the world and none for him! A just sentence? A loving Father? Let me forget to ask these questions. Forbid that I should think of these things! There is madness in that direction of the mind. Starving, starving! Was I wise to accept a life which shuts the door of love against me? Yet what could I have done? How better met the world than I have met it? Who shall conquer in his wrestle with fate? Fate? Shall I talk of fate? I, who proclaim a God who cares for the sparrows and carries the lambs in his bosom? Do I, who hold the cross before the eyes of dying men, and tell of a Father's love to little children, believe in fate? Alas, I do not know; and of my doubts, if doubts they are, which would so willingly be belief, I must speak to no man. And the lambs play two by two, and the birds cut the air in pairs.

“Was concealment an added wrong? Did she not ask wisely to what purpose confession should be made? To what end should the violent have spurned me, the jeering laughed at me, the compassionate have given me that hardest thing of all to bear—pity? I may have no answer to my questions. No man must hear them.

“Ah, scholars, ye have multiplied words, and the

ages have given you much language. Ye have spoken of somber things; of rapine and want, of the passion which devastates, the cruelty which tortures, the threatening which makes afraid; but the word which is most dreadful in the world's vocabulary is the word *alone!*

“But my daughter—let me breathe softly, for the pines may possess hearing and the sea knowledge—has she not received fair treatment at my hands? It not Love the great destroyer? Is not its atmosphere one of restlessness, of dissatisfaction, of despair? Shall not he who supplies its place with an interest which engrosses all one's strength, fills all one's heart, prove a benefactor? Thrice blessed knowledge which enables a father to do this for his child! If she should marry I must confess all. No man must become her husband without being made aware that no marriage bed rendered her birth holy. Of what avail then my years of penance? Might not the violence, the jeers, the pity, have better come at first rather than at last, early than late?

“She shall be happy without marriage. Her will shall bend, does bend, like a willow reed beneath my own. Art shall serve her as husband, children, home. How often does the marriage tie bind and gall. How often are its claims disregarded or repudiated. How often is the love which should cherish changed into the indifference which endures. How often does maternity entail woe. Over how many little forms have I said the rites for the dying while mothers, with bursting hearts, have sought in vain to be reconciled.

How does poverty bring dulness, madness and despair, and how often riches vanish to leave a state of life wholly unprepared for. She shall escape the sorrows of love, the agonies of motherhood, the caprices of fortune. Nothing shall be denied her because she shall ask nothing, want nothing, more than is given. Beyond the heart's longing, beyond the despair of loneliness, her father's knowledge—breathe softly, ye cedars, and ye sea babble not in words that man may interpret—her father's knowledge shall spare her these things, and make for her straight paths and pleasant places. Right? Who shall say I am not right? Is it not merciful to save from pain, to spare heartache? Will she not be honored, happy, satisfied? What matters it whether one's food be bread or fruit if he is thereby saved from hunger? It is all so plain, so plain!"

It was high noon. The fierce heat of summer beat steadily down. The distance made the sea appear stagnant. The song of the bird was hushed. Along the path where the priest walked the stunted-looking sweet fern sent up a heavy odor as he brushed it in passing with the skirts of his loosely swinging black coat. At his right and left stretched a pasture of sun-scorched grass and infrequent rills, whose evergreens had a sullen look beneath the glare. It was the unpitying meridian of day, with no soft shadows or tender changes; the hour when this susceptible soul felt most alone. Alone! The word had a terrible meaning for him. Cold, hunger, poverty, obscurity, of these he would never have been afraid. His was a

terror of an empty heart, of a house which no one made a home. He was a poet in soul, touched by all fineness, repulsed by all rudeness, even in his language often going back to the time when men had not forgotten gracefulness of speech in their eagerness to convey many thoughts in few phrases. His love of righteousness was strong, his ability to face the world's adverse opinions weak. Having entered with the enthusiasm of a devotee upon a profession which he had believed would give his soul delight and his longings food, he was too conscientious to withdraw, and yet unable, while his heart-hunger was at its keenest, to wholly renounce that which his withdrawal would have made possible. He was too weak to confess his error to man, too just to deny it to himself, unable to arrive at any definite and abiding conclusions; a questioner at times concerning those things which he had been taught to consider as everlastingly settled, yet afraid to answer his soul according to its own reasonings, one who over and over argued his own case, justified his own conduct, and yet was forever in unrest.

"Have I not explained? Is it not clear?"

The question and the arguments were always repeating themselves. He woke at night to go over them. They followed him to morning mass and evening vespers. They obtruded themselves as he sat by bed-sides waiting for death to come. They seemed to be printed on the page where the marriage service appeared. They were blazoned on the book which lay before him at the altar.

The doom which to him was most dreadful, and yet which he would not exchange for the world's scorn, was upon him. To no one must he tell his story or confide his doubts. The gnawing of the heart-hunger must be concealed, the wants of the soul borne without utterance. Life must be lived to the end uncompanied, and the despair of utter loneliness never shown.

It was the devastation of denial, the tragedy of silence.

V.

A FOREGONE CONCLUSION.

The man who seeks one thing in life, and but one
May hope to achieve it before life be done;
But he who seeks all things wherever he goes,
Only reaps from the hopes which around him he sows,
A harvest of barren regrets.

—OWEN MEREDITH.

“Why, man, it is inevitable. The Church of Rome laid down one of the master principles of progress and perfection when it declared that its priests should not marry. Large work requires undivided attention. The man who is not great enough to pay the largest price is not great enough to secure the largest prize. Did not he of whom the parable speaks sell *all that he had* to secure the pearl of great price? To-day men are clamoring for the pearl of great price, and offer as equivalent a tithe of their possessions, a portion of their talent, the remnant of their strength, the inspiration which comes to jaded brains and irritated nerves.

“‘Behold,’ says the sculptor, ‘I would evolve wonderful creations; forms of might, and power, and grace before which the world shall wonder and mankind be mute in admiration. But before I turn my

mind wholly to this great thing, before my soul is entirely consecrated to the work which is myself, my fingers utterly given to bringing into blossom the conceptions of my heart and brain, I will turn aside to court some maiden; I will drop my chisel and put aside the thoughts which are to become embodied things, while the wooed maiden becomes the wedded wife; and yet again thought and tools shall wait while a house is being selected and put in order, and the sculptor learns how to adjust himself to the duties of the husband and the father.' The wooing goes on, the marriage is consummated, the house is found and furnished, the children are born, the question of food and raiment, the extortion of the butcher, the raise in the price of coal, the quarrels among servants, or the illness of the wife who is forced to do without servants, the diseases of the children—a crowding and continuous multitude of cares, thrust aside the thoughts which might have become things, ambition moves along a lower level, accomplishment is shown only in an occasional good creation, distraction in multiplied failures. The man who longed for the best forces himself to think that he is content with well enough, and works according to his thought. He dies grasping a single leaf of the laurel wreath which he might proudly have worn.

Either this, or he is a bad husband whose wife will become to him a servant rather than a companion, a disperser of dogs and a silencer of cocks, as was the case with Jane Carlyle. In either case the man is a weakling and a coward. He shirks either the decree of

heaven or the responsibilities of earth. He dare not be lonely that he may be great, or shrinks from being less than great that he may be true in the less than greatness which is of his own devising.

"Michael Angelo was the embodiment of consecration to a lofty ideal. He brought no half sacrifice to the altar, no cheap thing to exchange for the pearl of great price. He worshipped not before divers gods. 'Behold, here am I,' he said to his divine Mistress, 'thy servant, consecrated, heart, brain, hand, time, to thy service. I will walk in no by-paths; no voice but thine shall allure me. I serve but thee.'

"The world's master sculptor, the ages' undying painter, was the result. Scattered forces do not bring forth mightiness. The hand which wields for all time must have a single aim."

The shaggy head was uplifted, the yellow eyes almost brown. They were sitting on the piazza of the small, low house which Father Alpheus occupied, the priest and the artist. Something in their conversation had suggested the question of the wisdom of forbidding priests to marry, and this, leading on to other things, had launched Vancourt on an argument which had evidently been well arranged in his thoughts. It was no new belief which he uttered, but it was the first time he had definitely put it into words. Even now it seemed as though he was as much speaking to himself as to his companion. He was not wont to argue. People in general considered him careless, curt, cynical, sometimes moody. His thought seemed to be that there

were but few with whom it was worth while to be in earnest, and talking was not his business. But sitting there in the summer dusk, with his attentive companion, he seemed sufficiently in earnest, sufficiently ready to avow himself so. After a moment's silence he went on:

"Ulysses does not often wish to have his ears stopped to the notes of the syrens, but listens and is enticed, and lets the destined haven remain unexplored while he obeys his fancies. The charge, instead of speeding straight to the heart of the mark, swerves and is scattered, and only partially sent home, and does but indifferent execution. In serving two gods neither is fully honored. Consecration is concentration. Let him who would enter worthily the Temple of Art shut the door behind him, and stand face to face with his Mistress, seeking no mortal with averted or side glances."

The priest leaned toward his guest. The dim light hid the eager look in his eyes, and in his voice was an intense ring as he said:

"And you? Have you thus entered, with consecrated zeal and allegiance, the Temple of Art? Will she be your only mistress? Have you *sworn* it?"

The artist was too much absorbed in his own train of thought to notice anything strange in the manner of his host. Still seeming like one who speaks to himself, he admitted more than he had ever done before. Slowly and distinctly he said:

"I have *sworn* it."

The almost darkness did not betray the look of sat-

isfaction which came into the face of the priest, who began almost immediately to speak of other things; of the stars, of politics, of books and of newly-broached theories of science and of religion.

It was late when Vancourt rose to go. While he was standing, before his departure, his future counsel was asked for Miss Trescott.

VI.

THE LONG BOW.

How many ages hence,
Shall this our lofty scene be acted over,
In states unborn and accents yet unknown?

—SHAKESPEARE.

The *White Heron* had landed her passenger, but instead of steering directly back to the island was drifting down the harbor with little heed from her manager, who was listening to a story. Flotsam was the narrator. He sat near the yachtsman, his fair hair and loose blouse blown about by the breeze which rippled over the waves and swept gently across the deck of the little craft.

Flotsam's imagination was of the fantastical order, and making use of all the knowledge of history, philosophy, romance, poetry and fairy-lore which his omniverous reading supplied, he wove together in numerous mazy webs tales of surprising combinations and bewildering color. Herr Lessing, whose German soul could but acknowledge a secret delight in his grandson's unsubstantial productions, nevertheless felt in duty bound to rebuke him now and then, generally using some American expression as though to offset the feelings of the fatherland.

"Gott in Himmel," he would ejaculate. "Yon scapegrace should be punished for so 'drawing the long bow,' " and then listen with the air of one who has done his duty.

"Of course it was aeons and aeons ago," Flotsam was saying, with a grave face. "Mr. Vancourt and Miss Trescott were lions then, and you——" his eyes resting for a moment on the straight, lithe-limbed figure before him in a searching way as though to make a sure identification, "were a panther. Jetsam and I were only moats in the air, and Jetsam did not take in the brightness of the sun as I did, and so she remained dark. Of course you big animals—for you *were* so big and fierce!—never thought about us bits of dust, but we watched you constantly. We thought it must be glorious to be strong like you, but we pitied you that you could not fly above the ground and visit the way-off beautiful places without walking. The blood was so hot and red in the man-lion, and so dusky and fierce in the man-panther, and all through the aeons since it could only fade; it could not utterly change. The woman-lion was not so strong as the man-lion, and her blood was not so red, and now you see Miss Trescott's hair is only yellow, and her eyes are blue, while Mr. Vancourt looks like a lion still, for his hair and beard are red, and his eyes like gold beads; and you are still dark, and your eyes have a deep look like pools where the trout hide. Oh, you were so strong, you three! You strode across the deserts and among the jungles, and leaped over wide streams, and slew the other large animals for your food,

and your roars and cries made the hills tremble, and the young, small creatures, when they heard them, hid themselves and were afraid.

One day when you, the man-panther, went down to the river to drink you met the lioness there, and you thought her beautiful, with her mane like the forest flowers and her movements like those of tree branches. You put your velvet paw upon her neck and caressed her, and licked her fur with your long, red tongue. The man-lion came upon you as you did this, and he was very angry. He lashed his tail and tossed his mane, and roared so loudly that the little animals all slunk in terror away, keeping close to the ground and under the bushes. He fell upon you, and would have slain you, but you stood before him, and looked into his eyes, and sang a panther-song which was so sweet that the river ceased flowing that its gurgle might not disturb you. The birds did not finish their songs, and the little animals forgot their fright in listening. The man-lion was not angry any more. He became your friend, and the lioness loved you. You made music for all the animals, and birds, and reptiles after that, and whenever you sang everything was still, and the river stopped flowing. You roamed with the man-lion and the lioness through the long, sunny days, and lay down at night with your paw on the mane of the lioness. You see the music came through your mouth then; now it comes through your fingers. Some day the people of all lands will stop to listen as the river, and animals, and birds, and reptiles did when you were a panther."

Victor Devereux did not seem at all surprised by this narrative, but listened as gravely and attentively as he would have done to the soberest statement of facts. He was well accustomed to these brain-mosaics of his boy friend, and so mightily hungry, so cruelly athirst for some manner of encouragement, some measure of hope, that even this fantastical reminiscence and unsubstantial prophecy gave him a sort of comfort. He did not speak, but looked straight ahead at the waves with the sunlight upon them, but seeing them not, while the yearning, wistful expression which was habitual to his face gave place to an eager glow, a shining light.

The vision of the young prophet had risen also before him.

"That was the way you looked when you charmed the man-lion, and made the river stand still," said Flotsam. "You will look like that again when you charm all the people and compel them to stop and hear you."

The yacht was brought to the shore some distance down the harbor. The two friends alighted and entered the near wood.

Under his arm the young man carried a violin case. Seating himself upon a fallen tree, he drew the instrument forth and began to play.

Vibrating, sobbing, trembling, the appeal of a starving soul went out on the summer air. It was longing embodied, yearning clothed with form, aspiration made vocal. Not a twig stirred, not a leaf rustled. A squirrel paused in his scramble up the

trunk of a near beech, and stood with his bright eyes on the musician, listening. At the feet of the player sat the lad, a fairer creation than mythical lore ever furnished, gazing with senses enthralled and lips apart, upon the violinist.

The bushes parted a little distance from the two, but they heard no sound. Vancourt began to hastily unpack his sketching materials, his artist instinct all alive.

"I must get that scene on paper," he whispered to himself. He began to sketch rapidly, but found himself unable to go rapidly on. His captivated senses held his hand poised in air. His brain could not express itself in lines and curves while his soul was floating away on that intoxicating melody. He brought himself sharply back to the task in hand, and by a strong force of will compelled himself to continue the sketch, but again the mind was wrested from its labor, again the hand suspended, again the senses taken completely captive, and the man of few moods, who laughed at sentiment and rejoiced in his utter self control, leaned his head on his easel and felt the hot tears come to his eyes.

What was there in the strains of a violin piercing the soft, hushed air to remind one of the terrible wants of the world and the unresponsiveness of men? Why did the hungry-hearted, the helpless, the despairing, all seem to be crying out in those passionately plaintive tones? Why did white faces and bloodless lips arise before one's vision? Had the wail of the universe found vent through the bow of this unheralded strip-

ling? Had spirits released from earth, but still remembering their by-gone sorrows, chosen this lad to voice for them past yearnings, to utter the cries which they had on earth forever repressed? By what untaught instinct did this boy-player take to his heart and express through his fingers the fierce stress of the driven soul, the anguished life? What gave him the power of interpreting the travail of multitudes treading the world's wine press with feet heavy and torn?

But hark! The melody is changing. As when the rain-fringed storm curtain is lifted a little, showing a narrow expanse of yellow and blue, so the despairing notes are exchanged for strains with a sound of hope in them; a sound which grows stronger until it becomes a pean of gladness and exaltation. The mind horizon and the heart atmosphere are cleared. The rose and gold are triumphant. And now, gone, too, are the ecstatic notes, and the last strains of the instrument have a sweet, hushed sound like those of a cradle song which the mother sings when the child has already closed its eyes in sleep.

The music ceased, the violin was replaced in its case, and the musician arose. Vancourt strode forward, pencil in hand.

"You are Victor Devereux, the lad who brings Miss Trescott to the mainland," he said abruptly. "Who taught you to play?"

"My uncle, Pierre Devereux, with whom I live on the island," was the quiet reply.

"And can he play like you?" was the next question.

"Like me!" exclaimed the lad. "Why, he was once

a famous *maestro*, and played before royalty in Berlin and Paris and Vienna, but now," sadly, "he is ill; has been ill for years, and cannot move about. It is paralysis of the lower limbs."

"Could he not send you abroad? You should be playing in the places you mention; playing everywhere. Why, boy, is it possible that you do not know, that your uncle does not realize, that you are a genius?"

"He thinks that I play well, that I might perhaps play before audiences," replied the lad modestly, paling and flushing at the artist's words, "but he is alone in the world but for me, and very poor. What can either of us do?"

"Very poor! You could make him and yourself rich. Shade of Orpheus! To think of two such musicians confined on that island! I am going there some day soon to sketch. I shall see your uncle. You are not content with your lot?"

"Content!"

Only a word, but the question was sufficiently answered.

"Well, it seems to me time that some third person took a hand in this affair. I shall go to the island in a day or two. Something must be done."

The boy's lips quivered. He spoke no word, but lifted his liquid eyes to the bearded face of the painter, and thanked its owner by a look.

"The man-lion and the boy-panther," said Flotsam under his breath. "It's almost like when they met by the river, ages ago, only the lioness is not here."

VII.

ENCHANTMENT.

Wherever she is she will contrive to live at high pressure, and justify her existence.—MAY KENDALL.

Love is your master, for it masters you.

—SHAKESPEARE.

Miss Trescott was seeing Paris through the eyes of Pierre Devereux.

Perhaps never to another was life a more vital thing than to Helen Trescott. She knew no sluggish heart beats. Her existence moved in strong currents, abounded in full tones and rapid vibrations. There were no prosaic hours in her calendar. The thing of the hour claimed her wholly, and became possessed of pulsating life and vivid color through her constructive thought and illuminating imagination.

Although her feet had never pressed the soil of any country save her own, she was a born cosmopolitan. She felt herself akin to all nations, rejoicing in their triumphs, agonizing over their national and personal tragedies, living, aspiring, suffering, enjoying with them. She was not in the little Maine cottage while listening to Pierre Devereux, but living the changing life of the gay capital of lovely, laughing, un-

fortunate France, equally happy whether her oriflamme be the white flag of Navarre or the tricolor of the republic.

Never were narrator and listener more *en rapport*. They traversed the boulevards, with their sparkling life and glittering equipages, entering the shops to examine shining silks, rare jewels and priceless works of art; they lingered in the cafés and restaurants where the celebrities gather to report or invent the spicy news of the day; they promenaded with the crowds through the streets. They passed beneath the colonnaded archways which give entrance to the Louvre, and wandered into the Place Napoleon to admire its gardens.

They stood among the massive ruins of the Tuilleries, and found their way across the shaded grounds to that balustraded, pavilioned square in the midst of which rises the obelisk of Luxor, which more than thirty-two centuries ago was set up in the great temple of Thebes by Egypt's oppressor, Rameses II.

In this square, called after a spendthrift king Place Louis Fifteenth, then, after its baptism in the blood of nobles, Place de la Revolution, and finally, when order had been restored, Place de la Concorde, the impressionable listener heard the quick sound of the guillotine, for it was to this spot that there were hurried for execution the victims of a criminally extravagant court and the vindictiveness of a maddened people.

They crossed the bridges which span the Seine, paused before palaces, and gazed at the spires of Ste. Clotilde, and the gilded dome of the Invalides. They

lingered among those who were enjoying the open air concerts along the Champ Elysees, and then wended their way to the place where stands the Arch of Triumph begun by the self-made Emperor as a monument to his own prowess and that of an army he thought invincible, and which was only completed long after his imperious heart had broken at St. Helena.

Many evenings were spent in these thought-wanderings, but the story was never told, the journeyings never completed.

Pierre Devereux the musician was also the patriot and the loving child of France. That through the world-tossings that strand multitudes on shores alien in every aspect to those which their hearts hold dear, he should have been flung on this sea-washed bit of New England coast, was one of the tragedies whose commonness turns the general mind from their pathos.

He gloried in his country's success, grew eloquent over her wrongs, glowed over her magnificence with a warmth of tone and vivacity of expression and gesture which only a Frenchman could have commanded.

Only once or twice, encouraged by the sympathy of his listener, he spoke of his own youth and its environment. He told in a half-sad, half-bitter way of his estrangement from his father because the latter could not, or would not, understand his son's determination to pursue the calling which from babyhood had pursued him. He talked of the only daughter of the house, and the fierce opposition of the family

to the handsome American whom she had secretly met and vehemently loved; an opposition which was finally overcome by the young man's consent to take the name of the noble family with which he would ally himself. Of the stepson's torture under the private taunts and public insults from which his adoption of a name did not save him, and of his final removal, with his wife and infant son, to America. Of the deaths of the husband and wife, which came within a few months of each other, and of his own inheritance of the small property and the care of the little Victor.

When he received the gifts of a nephew and a habitation the slow but sure paralysis was already creeping upon the musician, and three years later he sailed for the coast of Maine. Having carefully invested the small sum which his growing disability had taught him to hoard, he took up his abode in the humble house, and spent his days in remembering, and in teaching his nephew—whose talent and love for music astonished and delighted him—the violin and a good deal from books.

When he spoke of his vanished musical triumphs the face of Pierre Devereux became transfigured. The applauding crowds, among which had been many with princely titles and high honors, the richly appareled and bejeweled ones who had waved white hands and showered rare flowers at his feet; the gay illuminations, the sensuous delights of perfume, the thunderous recalls and numerous encores; all these were again delighted in by the man whom even the memory of

them intoxicated, and by the girl who, responsive as a chord of electricity and in affinity with all life, listened enchanted by his words and her own imagination.

"Who dreamed," she would say gayly to Devereux, "that I should find in these solitudes a theater to which I could repair whenever the mood seized me? How fortunate that Mr. Miller should have brought me here to hear you play. I suspect that he knew how well you talked, also, and wanted me to enjoy your picturings. You are most kind to entertain me so charmingly."

Not only to Pierre Devereux and Helen Trescott were these evenings enchanted. Seated apart, usually on the little piazza from which he could look into the lighted room, the dark-eyed Victor watched the face of the listener and thought of other things than bygone glories and past pleasures.

Night after night came thoughts, dreams, desires, born of earlier hours. He smiled when he thought of how often Father Alpheus came down to the wharf to see Miss Trescott safely landed. If the priest knew of his care for her! If he was aware that every motion of the yacht, which was kept so spotless for her sake, was watched and controlled as the mother watches and controls the motions of her child! If he realized that should aught of disaster occur that death would be sweet to the yachtsman could his life be given for hers—what would the man of God think if he knew!

Ah, but the mornings were fair, the evenings glorious, since her coming. How dainty she was as

she sat in the boat day after day and talked to him! Did any other woman wear those loose, light, delicately tinted things as the lily wears her bells or the rose her petals? Was there, could there be, any one like her in all the world? She was to him a revelation, a daughter of the gods made perfect.

That he would charm the people was Flotsam's fantastic prophecy, and he would love to do that, not so much for their approval as that he might win hers. Could he charm her alone or all the remaining people he would choose to charm her. It would be glorious to be great that she might take note of him, and be proud of his friendship and his talent. To do something splendid before her; among thousands to see her alone, and to play out all his heart to her, this would be life indeed. He used to dream of the applause of multitudes; he now dreamed of the appreciation of one. He had once longed to gain fame among men; he now thought of winning the admiration of one woman. That his wide desires had narrowed to one intense longing did not seem to him strange. He had come to know *her*. This to him was sufficient explanation.

Would the artist keep his word, and would its keeping result in his going away? He hoped it would, but not yet; not until the summer was ended and she gone. Then indeed would it be doubly desirable to leave the island which nothing could make pleasant any more, and begin to work with all one's soul for that which one coveted.

They called him a boy, he thought, but he was

scarcely a year younger than she, and with her blonde freshness and eager manner she seemed even younger than she was. If his love for this stranger, who was stately as a woman and sunny as a child, was a boy's love, what must a man's passion be like?

"The panther lay with his paw across the neck of the lioness; he roamed about with her, and she loved him."

The dark face glowed at this childish imagining. He loved to think of these fictions of the lad's, and fancy they were real.

Miss Trescott arose, and threw some fleecy thing about her shoulders.

"Thank you so much," she said. "I shall come again soon if I may."

Victor walked with her to the Miller cottage. On the left Venus was melting into the blue-black sky, her rays making a glinting track of brightness on the sea.

"Is she not beautiful!" exclaimed Miss Trescott, lingering a little, and gazing at the planet and the waves.

"So beautiful!" replied the lad.

But he was not thinking of the star.

VIII.

THE WOMAN THAT REMAINED.

To draw true beauty shows a master hand.

—DRYDEN.

He who is firm in will moulds the world to himself.

—GOETHE.

The artist was the woman that remained.

Never before had the painter's zeal so burned within the nerves of Helen Trescott as it burned there on the Maine coast. Never before had the night seemed so long in departing, the daylight so quick in fading. The girl's always vivid temperament was aflame with force. Heart and hand were alike eager. Hour after hour she worked with entire absorption, without a word, with hardly a perceptible breath, holding pencil or brush in strong, steady fingers, using each with a rapid accuracy which astonished and delighted Vancourt.

The passion which dominated the life of the artist made him, instead of this girl's occasional critic, her watchful and constant instructor. He would not have dreamed that such a state of things could come about. It was no part of his life-plan to put aside his own work that he might watch that of another, entirely for-

eign to his habits to think with any degree of solicitude about another's methods or progress; and he was doing both.

The moral strength of the young painter interested him. She could put away small things for great. She could estimate a thing truly. She did not defile sacred tools. She loved Art rather than the name of artist. She sought not prestige but power; not the praise of men, but the expression of her own soul. He owned her kinship to himself, and realized that in her consecration had found its comrade, enthusiasm its mate. He grew to feel that he owed her something, or rather that he owed Art something which could be rendered through her. No devotee should be allowed to work unworthily for want of knowledge. Those who loved the Mistress should, when possible, see that the offerings brought her were of a superlative order.

He was not a patient teacher, seldom a pleasant one. Praise did not come readily to his lips, but defects called forth no slow or uncertain comments. Every unstudied or overstudied stroke was an abomination to him, every untrue line a torture.

In New York Miss Trescott had been taught, or rather neglected, by one who, too much absorbed in his own affairs to give personal attention to the work of others, had, for the most part, put the instruction of his pupils into the hands of an inferior artist. Hence, in spite of the usual correctness which her own talent and artistic taste ensured, she sometimes brought upon herself the ready scorn and quickly kindled anger of her present instructor. She had asked that there might

be perfect frankness between them, and verily her request was granted.

"Your picture lacks harmony, and its tone is atrocious," the teacher would exclaim with his heaviest frown. "Was gradation utterly left out of your instructions? Have you learned nothing of values? That line is not sincere, this stroke is not true. You are copying, you are trying to imitate. See how this changes the whole thing."

And the brush would be snatched from her hand and a few carefully furious strokes give the painting a new atmosphere.

"Sketch with instinct, or put aside your pencil. You will never paint aught that is worthy unless you first see it with your soul."

These words the pupil heard again and again. She never thought of being angry or hurt. The words were nothing, their meaning was everything. She would regain pencil or brush, and with sincere but absent thanks, turn again to portfolio or canvas, anxious to utilize her new acquisition of knowledge.

And day after day under this masterly tyrannical oversight and criticism her work became less liable to offend her teacher. No time was too long to linger over minute lines if they at last became perfect, no experiments in light and shade too prolonged and exhaustive, no studies of atmosphere and perspective too exacting, if ultimate results were satisfactory.

She had come to be ardent by rule, to recognize the mightiness of detail.

One day Vancourt paused long before something

which she had wrought line by line, shade by shade, true in tone and atmosphere, wonderful in gradations and values, painted with her heart full of vibrant emotion and her hand compelled to linger carefully over every minutest line.

"Only an artist could have done that," he said. "You will succeed. Your dream of painting out your soul will come true."

Miss Trescott raised her glowing face, and put out her hand.

"You give me faith in myself," she said. "I do indeed thank you."

"Tell me of them, the masters," she would say, when the sun was low, and the light no longer sufficient for painting. Then would Vancourt forget to be silent and cease to be brief, and while the lessening light made bright patches under the trees and on the grass or mosses, would speak with an authority gained by close and many-times repeated observation of the works of painters, ancient and modern; of the powerful, pathetic productions of Angelo, Rembrandt, Leonardo, Tintoretto, Veronese, Correggio, and others; of the paintings of those who came between these masters and the lighter artists of our time; of the pure texture painting of Jan Steen, Don, Hals and Netscher; of the landscapes of the French painters, Corot, Rosseau, Daubigny and Diaz; of the realistic productions of Vollon, Stevens and Gerome; of the exquisite marines and deer paintings of DeNittis and the river banks and meadows of Troyon.

The long twilight would deepen into early night as

the talk went on. Fresh breezes, bearing the sound of bells on home-coming cows, would float up from the harbor where rocked the tiny yacht, waiting for its passenger. The boy, Flotsam, more beautiful than any of the masterly creations of which his friend spoke, would sit between the two painters, thinking little of the words he heard, but weaving in his mind fanciful tales concerning speaker and listener. Then Miss Trescott, with a pretty show of compunction at having kept her "gondolier," as she gayly called young Devereux, waiting, would trip down the hill, Vancourt striding by her side, Flotsam flying with the grace of a zephyr in front of her.

How glad the world was, how rich in happiness and in promise, thought the girl who lived her life so rapidly and tumultuously.

What simpletons people were, thought Vancourt, to confine themselves to cities and centers of fashion, to bore themselves with dinners and dances, and surfeit themselves with many-times breathed air and small talk, while such largeness and soul-satisfaction lay outside and away from it all.

His parishioners wondered a little at the intimacy which had sprung up between Father Alpheus and the artist, an intimacy which after Miss Trescott's arrival seemed to increase. The priest, usually so reserved and reticent, courted the company of the painter, often invited him to share his evening meal, and talked with him by the hour.

"The daughter of my old friend," he said one evening when six weeks of the passing summer had gone,

bringing the conversation around as he always managed to do, to Miss Trescott. "I promised to write her mother from time to time of her progress. Will you, who are a judge of such matters, tell me, who am so ignorant of them, what I may say to Mrs. Trescott? Does her daughter show herself an artist? Can it be confidently hoped that she will do more than ordinarily good work?"

The two were sitting on the piazza where so many of their evening hours were passed. Venus hung, like a celestial lamp, in the luminous sky. There was no moon.

"Indeed she is beautiful, wondrously beautiful!" exclaimed Vancourt, his face lighted by one of those radiant gleams which sometimes transformed it.

The priest started, and the hands on the arms of his chair grew icy cold.

Would the artist forget his oath? Since he had so soon found her beautiful, would he not love her, seek to wed her? Had the thing which in this lonely place had seemed impossible, been only precipitated by the isolation?

"I wish," said Vancourt, "there might prove to be truth in the speculation that we shall inhabit the planets after death. I should pray that I might find a home in Venus. But then, I suppose, like most things, she would suffer by near approach."

The numb fingers of the priest lost their tension; the feeling of fierce fear clutching his heart subsided. The man was speaking of the star.

Vancourt had heard and understood the words of

the priest, and his last observation had come because of a new and strange reluctance to speak of Miss Trescott's progress. He had always disliked to talk of his own work, and hers had come to seem like his own. Why must people pry and gossip? Why could they not wait for results and revelations, and not be eternally clamoring for signs along the way?

But Father Alpheus was evidently waiting for a reply, and he answered him in a brief and careless manner, and in words utterly at variance with his true feeling and belief.

"Your pardon," he said. "My mind was up there in space. You asked about Miss Trescott. She certainly shows talent, but 'Art is long' you know, and persistence and insistence are not always let on long leases. One oftener falters by the way, and goes after strange gods, than keeps straight on to the hoped-for goal."

"But," insisted the priest, "should she by some special gift of Providence have the insistence and singleness of purpose to put by all else and give herself as entirely and heartily to Art as you have done, what would be the result?"

"She would some day paint a great picture; perhaps many great pictures," said Vancourt, forgetting to speak carelessly, and addressing himself rather than his listener. "She would be known, appreciated, satisfied to forego all else, and cling to this one thing. She would utterly lose her soul to Art, and find it in Art."

The artist had said good night an hour since. The

chill and hush of midnight was about the place. Venus was riding high in the blue.

Within his room the priest sat, all his mental force gathered in one place for one purpose. Time, place, the deadly chill of the newly born morning, were unrealized. Unconsciously the fingers were clasped together so tightly that they creased and marked each other. The eyes and lips had a set look like those of one who has forgotten to stir a muscle.

One clear, steady, concentrated thought, which had become a command, was going forth in an unbroken, unweakened, uninterrupted current to work the will of its originator and make it another's will.

In her room on the island Helen Trescott awoke from sleep, and lifted her head from the pillow, wondering if a storm was coming. The air about her seemed palpitating with electricity, throbbing with magnetism. Could it be that the tall clock in the kitchen had struck only one? She wished it were daylight that she might paint. Why was it necessary for people to waste so much time in sleep and darkness?

She arose and looked out of her window. The sea was still. There were no clouds. Venus was too high in the heavens to be seen.

IX.

HONEYSUCKLE AND RUE.

For with memories I am haunted,
And the silence seems to beat
With the music of your talking,
And the coming of your feet.

—LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON.

Love is merely a madness; and I tell you deserves as well a dark house and whip as madmen do.—SHAKESPEARE.

Miss Trescott had gone away.

A telegram had been sent from the nearest railroad station to the Island. Victor had brought the message to the mainland, and searched till he found its owner, the yellow envelope, whose enclosure he instinctively felt meant disaster to his friend, in his hand.

He gave it to her, murmuring broken words of regret, as though he had been the author of whatever woe might be in store for her.

She tore off the cover, her eyes large with apprehension. The words written stunned her for a moment, and left no clear impression on her brain, but when she had read them for the third time she turned to young Devereux and said in a forced voice:

“My mother is dying. I must go to her.”

Her form swayed a little. The news was so terribly sudden! It came as the bullet comes, as the star falls. She put out her hand in a blind sort of way, still looking at Victor Devereux, and the lad passed his arm around her shoulder to give the momentary support which she needed.

She recovered almost instantly, and handed the telegram to Vancourt, asking him to see that it was sent to Father Alpheus, then kissing Flotsam in an absent way, she shook hands with the artist, and without remembering to gather up her sketching materials or speak of their disposal, went swiftly towards the yacht.

"Can I do nothing?" asked Vancourt in an oddly constrained tone. "You will wish to be taken to the station."

"Victor will see to it all, thank you," she had replied without pausing in her rapid walk.

In an hour she had left for the West.

There had been no conscious intention of selection when she had turned to young Devereux in those first moments of bewilderment. She never afterwards realized or remembered what occurred during those seconds when a thing which had a moment before been utterly undreamed of seemed to have grown so drearily old. Who has not known the way fresh sorrow has of impressing one with a feeling that he has never been without it?

But three people realized and remembered what had happened in those endlessly brief minutes.

She had gone away. The island and the mainland were alike desolate. The atmosphere seemed empty,

and all space aching for her presence. Life had lost its pulse, existence had a swept and garnished feeling; there was a sensation of the uselessness of all things.

Victor Devereux roamed about alone, or sat by the hour sending out from his violin the throbbings of his passionately lonely heart.

But as when storm-clouds cover the heavens there sometimes appears in their midst a point of light, so to him there was one radiant gleam amid the general darkness.

It was to him that she had first turned in her sorrow. It was his arm that had supported her when she would perhaps have fallen.

And Vancourt had been near; as near as himself.

It was such a precious thing to think of! Something to cover in his heart as grass covers the star-flower in the meadow; something to be looked upon daintily and softly, as the mother, putting aside the lace of the canopied cradle, looks upon the little face beneath. Something to dream over, lying face downward among the mosses, to be glad over among the still places of the forest; to thrill over where the low song of the waves was heard on the sheltered shore.

What sweet presage and divine presentiment he dared to believe was in that act of hers!

His imaginings had the shyness and delicacy of a poet; his fervor was that of a lover.

He had taken her to the station, had checked her luggage, and seen her safely bestowed in the railway carriage. To him had been spoken her last words.

She had turned to Victor Devereux in the first shock

of her sorrow; turned to him instinctively, and the arm of the lad had been about her neck, and in his eyes something more than sympathy. How tall and manly the boy was. He had not noticed these things before, the artist thought. It was a man's arm which had held her, a man to whom she had turned.

And Vancourt cared; cared with burning impatience and fierce pain. He realized that he would have counted it much had those first words been addressed to him, had his arms prevented her fall.

A shudder passed over him as he mechanically gathered up the sketching materials, having sent Flotsam to Father Alpheus with the telegram.

He sat down near the collected articles, and faced the unwelcome new truth.

A catastrophe had overtaken him, an undreamed-of thing thrust itself upon him. As the knowledge of her sorrow had come to her, so had come to him the realization of his passion; as the meteor shoots, as the lightning darts. He was stricken with a sort of paralysis, and sat for hours motionless, like one who has been hypnotized and is unreleased. It was growing dark when he at last arose, shook himself as though to throw off the numbness of body and brain, and went towards the village.

A battle royal had begun in the life of the artist. He was no longer numb, but tossed about by his passion, his remorse, his resistance as floating spars are tossed by the breakers which have wrecked the ship of which they were part.

As the time went by he was angry that the freedom

which the absence of Miss Trescott gave to him to return to his work was valueless to him, enraged when he found himself counting the days till her probable return, humiliated at the realization that if the hamlet was destitute of inhabitants as Selkirk's island it could not be more lonely to him.

He could not perceive with his characteristic insight, or paint with his usual force. He dashed on colors with reckless impetuosity and again and again drove his closed hand through the canvas, and then tearing it from the easel, dashed it to the ground.

He cursed himself as a criminal, and turned the lash of his sarcasm upon himself as upon a fool. He tore at his newly forged fetters like a Samson raging at unaccustomed bands. His mental chastisement of himself was as severe as though his present condition was self-planned, his emotions self-evolved and invited. He despised himself as being on a level with any unconsecrated trifler without ideas or ideals, as one who vowed vows and dishonored them, registered oaths and disregarded them. He was humiliated, defiant, furious. The contest never flagged save in the few hours of sleep which exhaustion made possible. He strode up and down the beach where the breakers beat tumultuously against the rocks, and through deep forest ways which no man frequented, snapping and trampling the dead boughs, twisting his beard into a red rope, and gathering his brows into a heavy frown.

One thought was predominant,—he would not be coerced, or turned from his life-purpose and allegiance by the disaster of passion or the devastation of love.

He stood with uncovered head as before a tangible presence, and cried with a voice vibrant with emotion:

"Great Mistress under whom alone I bow myself, and send up my soul's incense, discard me not in my disloyalty! I will be wholly thine own again! I have sworn it."

Day after day he renewed this vow.

He saw nothing of Father Alpheus. A day or two after the delivery of the telegram he had called at the house of the priest, and had heard with a sense of relief that he could not be admitted. Father Alpheus was ill with a slow fever which kept him in bed, and had begged that callers would defer their visits till he was stronger.

Should he go away before Miss Trescott's return was the question Vancourt asked himself. The answer was an indignant negative. Fly before the first assault of passion, thus acknowledging its power over him? Make a rampart of distance behind which to shelter his weakness? Never! He would remain, and if human, nay, superhuman, devotion could blot out disloyalty, this enthrallment should lose itself in accomplishment as waves lose themselves in the sea. He would be his own master and her teacher. He would tolerate nothing short of perfection in himself or her, and thus both should unite to make impossible that of which another might have dreamed as the outcome of this emotion. Circe was beckoning and entreating. He defied the syren, and vowed to come greatly into his intended port with not a sail furled, not a shred of canvas dishonored.

Flotsam had looked at Vancourt as young Devereux passed his arm around Miss Trescott's shoulder, and had seen his face flush darkly, and his eyes become a dusky yellow.

"He is angry," thought the child. "He was angry ages ago when the panther put his paw on the mane of the lioness. The panther should have his music ready to charm him now."

X.

SHADOWS OF HEAVINESS.

The Present is the living sum-total of the whole Past.
—CARLYLE.

“Dead! And a throng of strangers may bend above your face, and they who cared for you not at all put flowers in your bosom, and touch your hair, while I, who loved you so, ay, who love you so still,—shadows ye are voiceless, yet will I speak low, and loneliness ye have no tongue, yet I half fear you,—I who love you so am thousands of miles away, and must not move from my place. I am helpless before the wonder which my little world would feel should a poor priest travel so far for the funeral of a friend however old and dear.

“Indifference may bring its curiosity, and friendliness fill the white hands with flowers, but the strongest love may gather no rose for its dead, and break its heart in silence.

“Oh, to throw aside these robes, which belong to men whose passions have never awakened, or have been strangled forever, and take her still form in my arms, and call her mine in death as she was once in life!

“I rave. Would I really put aside the robe of the

priest? Am I a hypocrite in wearing it? Impossible! And yet, and yet——

“Dead! And I here! Cruel! Cruel! Whose cruelty? Who is responsible for the tangle and the torment of tortured lives and misunderstood souls? My miseries are the brood of my own hatching? Who shall declare it so and be able to defend his position? Why were men born at all? Am I my own creation and master? Is any man these things? Is he not the product of a thousand personalities before his own, the slave of a multitude of circumstances which form environment and shape destiny, of millions of emotions born not with him or controllable by him; the center and playground of numberless influences none, or few, of which were of his own making? Is not the past mightier to him than the present? Is he in any sense free?

“Who shall call him free who through heredity has had bequeathed to him a temperament as sensitive as the mercury in the tube, which the pressure of a finger on the glass will raise or lower, passions strong as the north wind and fierce as the lightning, nerves as easily moved as thistledown, pride which makes every word of scorn a flame, and is thrust out into the world to be the plaything of others as complex as himself?

“Can he by struggling free himself from the dominion of inherited characteristics? Who shall think on these things and still declare himself no slave?

“And yet God loves His children. Does He? Does love leave souls in desolation, and hunger, and travail? How can one be sure of a beneficent ruling power

amid so much misery and misrule? Great God! Is there *no* rest? I tell my people of rest. Do they find what their teacher can only speak of from books? Has any one really found rest? Will he ever find it here or hereafter? Is there a hereafter? A world where I shall see *her*, and know her, and acknowledge her as my own? Is not life what Heine thought it, a child lost in the dark? To what end do we strive and struggle, put desire in leash, bind passion, smother love of delight as a child of iniquity? Of what avail are energy and effort, the thirst for knowledge, the struggle for place? Are not the insects which float in the summer sun, which live without thought of life and die without fear of death, more blessed than we, who toil under hope, groan under despair, and sacrifice present joy for that which may be only an Oriental tradition, a legend woven by dreamers of the East?

"If a man dies shall he live again? What shall assure us that in our turnings from coveted delights we are not bartering something for nothing? By what certain things shall doubt be met, apprehension silenced? Why does not frenzied supplication and soul-dictated prayer bring answer to these questions? Is it because there is no God to hear?

"And *I* ask these things! My people come to confess faint doubts, petty waverings, and the man whose soul is sick with uncertainty bids them believe, and be of good cheer, gives them absolution, breaks the bread for them, and they eat and are satisfied, while he whose hands puts it to their lips is starving, doubting, dying for want of heart sustenance.

“Wicked? Great God, if God indeed there be, can one be accounted wicked for thoughts which rush unbidden and unwelcomed, into his mind? Can belief be forced? Can unbelief be shut away as we bar our doors against thieves, by an action of the will? Must one be considered wicked for harboring that which he hates, and would so gladly hurl from him once and forever?

“Alas! I can answer nothing, and nothing answers me. If souls of the dead live why does *she* not answer me? She loved me well. Has physical death changed her utterly? Does she not remember, or has she not yet realized, that the silence between us may now be broken? If law which deals only with results, and gives no thought to causes, reigns in heaven, in what are men bettered by entering there?

“Oh, this stumbling in the dark with feet that would fain go forward in lighted ways! this groping among shadows with hands that, longing to hold in certain clasp the rod of faith, close only upon a reed of uncertainties!”

For two weeks the priest had lain ill. He needed rest the people said, speaking more truly than they knew.

Miss Trescott had been a fortnight away. Seven days after her departure Father Alpheus had received a telegram signed by her saying that her mother was dead, and a letter received later told him the particulars of the illness, death and burial of his friend, and that when the daughter should return he would receive a sealed package which the dying woman had directed should be given to him.

The monotony of the colorless years, the never-ceas-

ing craving of a starving heart, the want of satisfaction in all that pertained to existence, were the sledges whose silent, persistent blows on a too-sensitive and flexible material had hammered it into unwelcome shapes.

The unrecognized madness which grows out of distorted, constantly reiterated thoughts, the unstamped insanity which is the result of puzzling problems long dwelt upon and wholly unshared; the feverish view which a too-fixed and never-varying gaze makes inevitable,—these things had done their work of partially unhinging the mind and uprooting the principles of the priest.

He was, by his own desire, left almost entirely alone during these days of illness.

He slept little and took almost no food. His whole being was in a tumult. This latest calamity which had overtaken him was like the fuse which fires the train already laid. Slumbering thought took shape, bridled impressions became active ideas, doubt shook his soul, reason, with its pitiless insistence upon logical deductions, tossed him about as a toy boat is tossed on swelling waves. He fled frantically to the promises of the Gospel, and paused sick at heart before the thought that no one could declare with confidence that these Gospels were not of man's invention. To no one in his church, or in any church, could he go, for to no one he believed had there been vouchsafed knowledge of heavenly things which had not as certainly been given to him.

His mental atmosphere stifled him. His spiritual

lungs could not draw from it the breath of life. The sea on which he was adrift seemed shoreless. The compass had broken, and his oars had slipped from his hands.

Desolation covered him like a garment, despair shut her iron door in his face.

Should he arise from his bed of bodily sickness and mortal doubt and continue his priest's work?

"Why not?" he said wearily. "No harm can come of it. If it be true what my people doubt not and I so long to believe, surely the Lord will remember that I break the bread not unworthily, since I am so anxious to have faith, and if it be only a superstition which makes them to eat of this bread, still let them be happy. Better happiness with ignorance than despair with knowledge. Let them live their lives with peace purchased at any price. It is the heritage I most devoutly wish for them. And for me—what? Will the end come soon? And after that, what? O God if thou didst make me I am thy child. Give me an answer ere my heart turns to stone, and my thoughts become those of a madman. Leave me no longer in this torment. Show me some certain sign that thou livest, that thy heaven is not an imagination of dreamers! I faint in my loneliness, and sink in my helplessness. O Christ, if thou dost indeed exist, and did indeed die for us, I implore thee by the wounds in thy feet, by the spear thrust in thy side, by the drops of agony on thy forehead, make known unto me that by which I can arise from this place of torment, and enter thy courts with heart triumphant, and feet which know the way of their going!"

XI.

IN PALLID LAND.

O day and night, but this is wondrous strange.

—SHAKESPEARE.

A tender mysterious night, a land of those shadows which come between the lingering morning darkness and the hastening morning light. An atmosphere pale as the silver mist which rises over lowland meadows while the day is still half unborn. A soft, caressing night without the harshness of blackness, or the coldness of gloom.

The priest is lingering in this land of half lights.

“He seems to sleep. He takes no food, and scarcely swallows the wine which is poured between his lips. Father Henry has visited him several times, but he does not waken when spoken to. I fear he is very ill.”

So spoke the housekeeper, a gray haired woman from another parish, educated, refined, and a recluse.

Very ill. Had the priest reasoned of the matter he would have declared that for the first time in years he was certainly well, for the first time at peace.

The half-night which existed for him held him as tenderly as the rose holds its heart. People came to his bedside, and looking on the wan, white features

and sunken cheeks, declared that certainly this must be death. Rocked in the lullaby of his fancies, drawn away from reasoning, longing, loneliness; at rest from desires and doubts, the priest thought, with hushed exultation, "Surely this is life!"

The only sound familiar to his everyday senses which he heard now was that of the sea. In the trance-like sleep which held him he took note of the monotone of the waves, and listened for the breaking of the surf against the rocks. This sound had for years given him a feeling of companionship, almost his only one, and now it remained, and mingled as harmoniously with his sensations as sunlight with air, or mist with rain.

He seemed floating in a sea of ether as formless and void as was the new world before the voice of God spoke order out of chaos, all about him a gray mist, with him no sensation but that of rest and peace. Nothing more for hours. Then at the left of him the mist begins to be broken by a shimmer of rose and gold. It parts, and is folded back like a curtain of filmy lace. At right and left the softly piled grayness falls in overlapped masses of silver whose edges are lightly touched with the gleam behind them, which is a halo rather than a ray. A background of blue is disclosed, above and beneath which, in unformed gracefulness and unarrayed beauty, drop the melting folds. Nothing for many minutes against the space of softest, clearest blue. But behold! A picture is being formed, a Face is appearing. Clearly and more clearly the outlines are defined. The gaze of the priest is riveted upon the miracle which is growing before his

eyes. As though some invisible artist was at work with quick but never-erring brush, line after line appears, feature after feature grows distinct. The Face becomes rounded into perfect contour, flushed with life and beauty. The curling brown hair, soft with the softness of a child's locks, is tossed away from the full brow as though displaced by the breeze. The perfect, tenderly masterful lips are hidden by no beard. The strongly delicate features need nothing to add to their perfection. The veins on the white temples are distinctly visible. The eyes, with their hue of the deep places of the sea, more luminous than the velvet depths of the nearest, fairest star, and with the very smile of God within them, are meeting the eyes of the gazer with a look that burns straight to his soul. The covering falls away from the strong, graceful throat, leaving the neck exposed. The face is seen in two thirds profile. The head is uplifted in a way suggesting might which is not haughtiness, power mixed with no trace of assumption. Across the azure background and around the Face, veiling but not concealing it, is a softly luminous glow, a tender shining on which one might gaze as on the low sinking sun.

In ecstasy the priest beholds the vision. Without effort he absorbs into his memory the tenderly masterful lips, the heavenly smile of the eyes, the fair hair, the blue-veined brow, and his heart goes out in a wordless, burning longing towards this overwhelmingly beautiful creation.

Whose is this marvelous Face? Surely no mortal

countenance was ever so grandly-soft, so majestically tender! Whose is this Face?

He asks the question mentally, and as though in answer there flashes across his mind words familiar but now fraught with a new illumination and meaning.

"Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me?"

The words of Christ. But this could not be Christ.

The countenance of Jesus of Nazareth was sad. The sorrow of years short by days but long by suffering was in his face. This was not the countenance of the God-man who toiled up Calvary, bowed beneath an outward and inward cross. The marks of a mighty travail were upon that face, and the hair was matted to the temples by the thorn-brought blood. Anguish had traced itself upon that countenance. The Redeemer had died a death that branded and burned its marks of suffering upon his features.

The thoughts of the priest become disconnected. Parts of familiar sentences, taking new meaning from their new surroundings, mingle with his attempts at reason. The Christ was crushed, and humiliated, and broken, and killed....."Death is swallowed up in victory." Had not painter and sculptor ever drawn the Christ of the anguished brow, the pain-transfixed countenance? This Face...."to sit on the right hand of God"...."O death, where is thy sting?"...."I make all things new"...."There shall be no more sorrow"...."to me is given all power in heaven and earth"....All power in heaven, and unhappiness

there? . . . "The Son of man shall come in his glory."

Power, glory, victory? All things new? Former things done away? Surely the cross and the anguish and the shame were former things.

The very thoughts of the priest stand still. There is the hush of a great awe in his heart, and his hand goes up to his face to shut out for an instant the vision which a half-feared recognition has made so grandly awful. He scarcely whispers the words, but they come, breathed with an intensity which makes them distinctly audible.

"THE VICTORIOUS CHRIST!"

And now the watcher sees about the wonderful Head large, melting, lustrous stars which float with an undulating movement, ever keeping their orbit in the small sphere of blue. But behold! they are drawing nearer to each other, nearer to the wonderful Face. They circle about the perfect Head, and then melting into consecutive places, link themselves together as a crown which touches the blue-veined forehead and the clustering hair, and wreathes itself about the regal brow. They have lost none of their brightness, but have taken to themselves new and marvelous colors. In the center of the forehead is a star of luminous whiteness; the star of purity. On its right glows the red star of love and of power. On its left shimmer the blue rays of the star of constancy. Next are seen the golden rays of the star of hope. On the right of the red star quivers the delicate lavender orb of intuition and perception, and joined to it is the pink-rayed star of com-

passion, whose nearest companion is the soft-hued, amber star of tenderness.

It flashes out its meaning to him, this star-crown, in a thousand rays. It plays in shining beauty, and clothes itself in wonderful suggestions. The priest reads its signs, and comprehends the language of its hues. His heart goes out in intense, wondering adoration. He does not know how long the vision lingers. For him time has ceased to be.

Presently the star-crown begins to fade. It becomes a ray of white light, and then disappears. Back into the mist the pictured Face melts. The gray closes over the blue.

The priest stretches out his hands; his spirit hands, for his material hands are still motionless, and his spirit voice whispers with vibrating earnestness:

“O thou wonderful One, leave me not to the barrenness of former times. May I not speak to thee and receive thine answer before thou leavest me alone? It has hitherto been so dreary, and I have called to thee mightily, and thou wert afar off.”

The mist remains where the Vision has been, but into the mind of the priest flash words as old as the rainbow, but repeated with personal phrasing, fraught with new meaning and promise which seem fresh as the dew dropped that morning upon the grass.

“I will lead thee in a way thou knowest not....a little child shall lead thee....the Comforter shall come....I will abide with thee....fear not....”

The sea sounded on, and the sojourner in pallid land heard it and was glad.

Slowly the mist floated away, slowly came the consciousness of human presence, the realization of earthly faces about his bed.

"The breath is more perceptible," declares the physician, "and his heart beats more strongly. We may hope that all will now go well."

The priest opens his eyes, but sees not the faces about him, only the Face lost in the mist but engraved upon his memory for all time. The star-crown still glows for him, the deep eyes still burn before him, the regal Head is present to his spiritual vision. He looks into the faces of those about him, but still beholding one Face, whispers:

"I have seen, I still see, the Christ."

"He wanders," Father Henry remarks to the physician.

The priest hears, and faintly smiles as he listens to the monotone of the waves.

XII.

REVELATIONS AND RESOLVES.

High thanks I owe to you....who carry out the world for me to new and noble depths, and enlarge the meaning of all my thoughts....A man who stands united with his thought conceives magnificently of himself.—EMERSON.

One evening in middle August Victor Devereux guided the little yacht across to the island for the last time. He was going, through the intervention and influence of Vancourt, to Paris. Going with his violin and his aspirations, and that which had become the mainspring of all his desires and strivings, his love for Helen Trescott.

It was a hushed night. The broad, crimson belt in the West had narrowed to a ribbon of pink. The tender young moon cast pale shadows on the deck of the tiny craft.

Brave in hope, but immeasurably saddened by the thought of parting from her who colored all his dreams, Victor forgot the shyness which in the white light of day had rendered him almost entirely silent in the presence of his loved one, and talked like a man.

Miss Trescott, throwing, as was her wont, all her heart into the thing of the moment, was wondering, anticipating, dreaming with him.

To-night, with the hour and his fresh outlook giving him ease and a command of language of which she had not deemed him capable, and with his possible future before her vision, she saw him in a new light, and entered into real sympathy with him.

The hour for the beginning of a new friendship had struck. What is it that after months, perhaps years, of unrecognized spiritual relation, flashes into consciousness of unmistakable sympathy between two souls? To Helen Trescott Victor Devereux had hitherto been merely the silent, serving lad who had met her convenience. To-night her heart reached past all forgetfulness and indifference, and claimed him for her friend.

She had never heard him play. She had imagined that his performance would not differ materially from that of any amateur player, and had thought that it would not be pleasant to listen to it after the masterful productions of his uncle; and he had been too delicate to force his talent upon her notice.

"You will let me know of your progress?" she said in her earnest way. "I shall be so glad to hear how you are getting on."

"I may write to you? And you will answer? You will really like to hear of my movements and my work?"

The voice of the lad was trembling with gladness.

"Certainly," was the answer. "Why should I not care? Will it be long before you can play before audiences, I wonder? I have never heard the sound of your violin, you know."

“Will you hear it now?” said the lad eagerly. “I have it here. Will you allow me to play, just once, for you alone?”

She assented, wishing a little that he had not asked this. Imperfect notes would but poorly accord with the tenderness of the evening and the sweet beginning of friendship.

The lad lifted the instrument from its case and brought it to his shoulder. The yacht hardly moved, and the sea softly caressed its sides. The moonlight fell on the water and the sails, and lay in a silver square between the two occupants of the boat.

The musician drew his bow across the strings, and forgot all material things. The intensity of love was in his soul, the pathos of parting sobbing itself out in his swift touches, the madness of passion burning itself into fierce strains under his fingers. He was alone with her who made the sea grand, the moonlight tender. For him no one lived in all the universe but the woman to whom he poured out his heart in sound.

His listener sat in an enraptured trance. This the amateur whose performance she had dreaded! This the learner of the sea-washed wilderness! This the lad who had seemed but a part of the boat which served her convenience! She thought of Sir Launfal who had carelessly tossed an alms to the Christ, and a great wave of shame and repentance came over her as though her unconsciousness and ignorance had been crimes. Could it be human fingers and a human heart and brain which produced those sounds? Did not a million lovers, dead with their love untold, voice their

too-long silenced passion in those strains? Did not a myriad plead of heart yearnings too long unlistened to, in those chords? Pathos had deepened into tragedy, love wailed itself into one intense chord in those sounds. A man with a violin? It was the spirit of Music, touching and controlling the winds, and no human being and man-made instrument. It was burning fire, swift moving light. The world! There was no world. It was all a stretch of waves, a brooding of moonlight, a universe of sound. She sat like one bound with chains, and half swooned with the force of her emotions. At length she touched the musician on the arm, and bade him stop. Her head sank on her hands, and a shiver passed over her as though she were deathly cold.

The lad put his violin aside, and touched her hand.

"It has told my story," he said. "Do you think that if in the future you should hear me play and know not the name of the player, that you would recognize the touch?"

"Could more than one mortal ever play like that?" was the answer. "You are inspired, or rather you are music itself breathing out its life. Study! If you must study to play the birds should study to sing, the river to flow. Go, and conquer the world. You will be the Cæsar of the musical sphere, the Alexander of the realm of sounds."

The word had been spoken, and become life.

The world might grant him its endorsement; in the realm of music he might gain an honored and honorable place; but never could critic or patron truly claim

that he had decided anything, conferred anything. The violinist had received his kingdom, and the hand of an unknown girl had crowned him. She who was his world approved of him. Henceforth there was nothing he would fear.

Vancourt had watched the yacht put out to sea. He had bidden young Devereux Godspeed, and had turned with a half guilty feeling away from the thanks which the lad's earnestness had made broken and disconnected. He was glad the boy was going, and in a measure despised himself for his gladness, for he knew that it was not wholly caused by the thought that a heart-longing might be met, genius given its way. Before that day when a hatefully sweet knowledge had come to him he had decided and promised that the lad whom he declared to Pierre Devereux must be the reincarnated Orpheus or the river god Pan, should be sent to Paris. Had this thought come after that hour when the lightning-like grief and quickly recognized disaster had descended upon the two artists, it is doubtful if it would have been carried to fulfillment. Vancourt was honorable in every fiber of his being, and after that day he would probably have mistrusted his own motives too much to have acted upon them. He did not feel himself wholly honorable now, as he paced the shore and watched the slowly moving yacht.

The determination to conquer and banish that which lowered him in his own eyes and unfitted him for the loyal carrying out of that whereunto he had set himself was of no avail. A mighty passion had laid hold

of him with a grip that knew no loosening, obeyed no demands.

If young Devereux succeeded—and he must succeed if the world had any soul to be touched—he would soon be famous, would soon place himself in a position to marry. How the man wandering up and down the shore, twisting his red beard, hated himself for the pain this thought brought. What if the boy did marry, and married—her? Any man was welcome to that. Ah, but he knew with a jealous knowledge that no man would be welcome to do so, knew that the certainty that another held the right which he so steadily and strongly refused to win for himself would be unutterable torture; and the knowledge, like the thought, was a hated torment. He thrust this phase of the subject sternly by, hurling it aside as one would hurl a firebrand from him only to feel its hot breath still.

But the artist knew there would be another regret, a manly and noble regret, in his heart should his pupil become, for years at least, the wife of any man. He remembered all the reasonings which he had employed in speaking to Father Alpheus of those who would accomplish great things. In the very warp and woof of his nature was woven a belief in the things he had then uttered, and now a new thought presented itself to his mind. Had no hint of the lad's love been given him would he have scrupled to try to save this gifted one from the stultification which marriage would be sure to bring? She was an artist, not a dauber; a creator, not an imitator. This feeling of Victor's was a boy's love, and in the capitals of Europe would prob-

ably evaporate more rapidly that it had been formed. Even if it never evaporated, should he, her teacher and the servant of Art, consent to its standing as a barrier to greatness and completeness? There were plenty of maidens to console disappointed lovers, myriads of women unstamped and uninspired by genius. Let these be the keepers of homes, the mothers of children. Let those of common fiber do the world's common things, but permit not the hand whose power was a command to turn aside to perform trifling duties.

His resolve was taken. One more should be added to the ranks of those who turned not from the service of the divine Mistress to find diversion in common ways. From utterly different directions and motives he and the priest had arrived at the same conclusion and desire.

In Art Helen Trescott should find her happiness, her satisfaction. She should, as he had once said she might, "utterly lose her soul in Art, and find it in Art." Would she prove worthy to abide in the Holy of Holies? Would she step beside him along the way of greatness which was also, according to the world's thought, the way of self denial? He hoped so; he believed so. He would at least put her to the test. No boy's love, no man's passion, least of all his own, should shackle her freedom, hold her genius in chains. He would be her friend indeed, and the friend of Art. As he had renounced the thought of her love so should she renounce, or better, never harbor, any possible thought of that which would make her less than the artist. The laurel which she might win should not

wither unworn, the possible honors remain unwon, undeserved. In this time of resolution he raised his eyes as he had done in that time of his severest torment, and his tone was full and steady as he said:

“For myself I have sworn unswerving allegiance to thee, my Mistress. For her I now swear it if it be possible to bring it to thee. The hordes who dabble and pretend shall not count her among themselves. Heaven has ordained her for, and the signet of power has sealed her unto the elect. She must obey the soul’s high behest, and barter not her precious heritage.”

The ripples still kissed the pebbles, a soft shimmer lay on the water. The young moon was sinking toward the horizon.

The artist turned toward his farmhouse home, comforted by his freshly generated resolution.

XIII.

THE EBBING TIDE.

Who thinks, at night, that morn will ever be?
Who knows, far out upon the central sea,
That anywhere is land? and yet a shore
Has set behind us, and will rise before.

—BAYARD TAYLOR.

The package which Helen Trescott put into the hands of Father Alpheus on her return from the West contained little save two written papers. In one of these, a letter to himself, the priest read:

“I feel a conviction that I shall not remain here, and I prepare to go. I shall leave no will, and the property will, of course, revert to the child.”

Then followed an account of the scene at the death-bed of Robert Trescott, and a repetition of the dying man's words concerning his disinherited cousin, Archibald Trescott.

“If it should ever come to your knowledge,” the letter went on, “that wife or child of Archie Trescott lives, you will, I know, help Helen to do that which is just. By moral right the bulk of the Trescott property belonged to this discarded son, and now belongs to his possible wife or offspring. Let us meet in the Hereafter—O my friend, we must, in justice to ourselves,

since life holds so little for us here, believe in a hereafter—let us meet there knowing that no one was robbed by us or ours of aught that was morally his. No matter what the cost may be, I insist that Robert Trescott's last wish be met, if possible.

“I have instructed my daughter to call upon you, as my friend and hers, for advice and counsel. God knows whether it will ever be necessary or well to tell her all. I pray that she may not marry. She seems to look forward to nothing save devotion to Art. Will heaven be just enough—for who shall say that suffering should come to her for that which was done before her birth?—to bind her soul to that which shall save her joy alive and keep her heart from torment? In this wise may come compensation, healing, adjustment.

“I leave for you a paper to be given to Helen in case of her contemplated marriage, telling the whole truth about her parentage. Should your death seem near before this possible marriage, place the paper in safe hands for her. She is never to see it unless she is about to become a wife, or in the face of some contingency which I cannot foresee. In case of need perhaps you will prefer yourself to tell her the truth.

“I enclose her photograph, and a ring you once wore, which has since lain in a drawer with a dead flower. Do you remember those rare blossoms which we found on that night? I need not ask. You will never forget. The thought has grown sure in my mind that not in my life, but by my death shall come to you and to me the things we need. If it be true that unto

released spirits it is given to be aught to those they love on earth, you shall not be without my ministration. I have a strange fancy about those flowers. They were the blossoms of innocence. We never found them after we sinned. I searched long and faithfully, but missed them utterly after that disastrous night. The perfume was unlike anything we had ever known. If it be permitted I will make that perfume to you the *sign and assurance of my presence*. In the hour when you need help, when you are weak and tempted and desolate, it shall bring to your remembrance another hour when weakness was two lives' undoing, and cause you to be strong. If the perfume come to you, know that I am near. You shall work and walk no more alone if my prayer to be with you be granted. Be comforted, and *look for the sign*."

The priest put the box aside and leaned his head on his hands.

Remember that night! The light and twilight made by the moon and the trees, the wind-tossed shrubs, the tufts of waving ferns, the blowing boughs, the wide swathes of silver on the meadow grass below, the marvelously beautiful flowers opening their full bloom to the night, and sending their intoxicating scent into the dusky hour of sweet pain and appalling knowledge!

Many years were between that night and this. Death had stilled the burning heart and chilled the glowing lips of his then companion, and his priest's robe was now heavy and somber about him, but there was a drawer of his desk that he dared not open; a drawer in which lay a single dead flower which the

years had no more robbed of its fragrance than they had robbed his soul of the remembrance of that hour when its perfume first appealed to his senses.

How distinct had become to him the difference between passion and love, the one like the seething lightning bolt unloosed but to destruction and death, the other like the sun, hoarding warmth that it may radiate it unto life and power and uplifting! With what certainty had he proved that of his ill as well as of his well doing one must reap sixty or a hundredfold! A moment of fierce delight, years of misery! An hour of unholy indulgence, a double decade of remorse! Oh, infamous falsehood, daily repeated, by which the devastating thing passion is christened Love!

It was said that Father Alpheus was much changed by his illness, but those who declared him so could not put their feelings concerning him into words. His face, always pale, was whiter now, and in it was the meditative, expectant look of one who heeds but little the things about him, but listens, and waits in alert dreaminess for signal or sign. Neither to their minds nor to his own did it tangibly occur that to him had arrived one of those crises which come when the tide of circumstances has drifted in a certain direction to its full limit. His life-pendulum had swung to its farthest possible point. The return swing was inevitable.

The manner of the priest was less austere than of old, and a new gentleness was in his speech. People came more readily to him for counsel, more freely laid before him their doubts and fears. Into his discourses

there crept the hesitating note of one who would learn with his people rather than be unto them a law.

The lonely man in his somber dress, so unlike the men about him, had always possessed a peculiar fascination for the child, Jetsam, who, more silent than her brother, was possessed of a mind of greater fastidiousness and more deeply studious propensities. She wondered that one who owned and read so many big, wise-looking books, and looked so reserved and learned, should linger among those whom Herr Lessing designated as a lot of ignoramuses.

Jetsam was accounted a strange child, and was looked upon merely as her unlikeness to other children which caused her to go on long walks with the priest, and to linger in and about his house. She was a lonely little being. She did not, like Flotsam, make friends readily, but lived a brooding, uncompanioned life of unsprightly fancies and unchildlike reasonings. One day when a high wind had blown the priest's hat far from him she had secured it and brought it to its owner, who, after thanking her, had spoken so kindly to her—fancying something in the look of her dark eyes was akin to his thought—that she had remained by his side all through his walk. Thus was begun an acquaintance which grew into a friendship between two whose lives, apparently far apart, really touched at several points. The child came and went. The priest grew to expect her, and to be sorry when she stayed away.

The two did not talk much together, but the priest was sometimes surprised by the girl's questions,

started on many a new train of thought by her reasonings, and felt more companioned by her than by many of thrice her years with whom he had been thrown in contact. More than once he found himself repeating the words heard in the land of shadows, "A little child shall lead thee."

Father Alpheus was a haunted man. In the morning sunlight, amidst the noon brightness, among the shadows of evening, in the mists of the valley, in the foam of the waves, he saw a Face; the Face of the full brow and breeze-tossed hair, of the blue-veined temples and tenderly masterful lips; of the eyes with the smile of God within them; the Face above which glowed and glimmered in many-hued radiance the crown of stars. The eyes, with their color of the deep places of the sea, look into his with their soul-entrancing glance, and he forgets in his rapture to be lonely, and ceases to be doubtful. The words which came to him in that land of grayness and of glory return in mosaics of broken thought, supplemented by thoughts and questions of his own.

"The Comforter shall come. Not always in the same way perhaps. The old thought was different, but why necessarily truer? Is it in this form He shall come to me? 'I will abide with thee.' Is it in this wise, O Lord, that thou wilt abide? Why have I, a sinful man, been singled out to behold Him before whom angles and archangels veil their faces? I have questioned, and sinned, but, O Lord, thou knowest how the dagger of doubt has lacerated, how the sword of sin has slain. Abide indeed, and let me learn through that which

comes from beholding thy countenance the way of righteousness and of peace!

"Art must be her life, her companion, her all. Another prays for it; another whose living wish and dying desire add a thousandfold to my determination."

Thus spoke the priest when the two letters which had been brought to him by Helen Trescott had been several times read, and put carefully away. The hidden books, books which had been studied at night, books which would have been regarded by his simple people as volumes of dire iniquity, were again scanned to see if any new interpretation or fresh information might thus be gained.

In the summer night, with the curtains drawn before the unclosed windows, the priest sits alone with the picture of Helen Trescott before him, his mind going out to its original in a concentrated volume. He looks intently at the photographed countenance, and although he does not for an instant lose its outline or expression, another Face glows behind it, comes nearer, mingles with it, and the intense thought-current goes out charged with the impress of that countenance of beauty and of power as well as with the wish of the sender. A new thought, which arrests the old and grows into an intense, burning desire, comes to the priest. Could *she* be made to see this Face? Made to see it so clearly that she could paint it? Ah, God! Did ever brush lend itself to such a work? Did ever inspiration picture to the mind aught which could for a moment rival this heavenly vision? Who could paint this Face and go back to the doing of common things, or be allowed to remain in ordinary standing?

The priest stretches out his hands in an agony of entreaty.

"For power to send my thought with the strength of the thunderbolt, with the certainty of the lightning!" he cries. "Behold! I would give her sure fame, and unto the world this great gift of beauty. Oh for the will that brooks no denial!"

He feels stealing into his every nerve resistless strength. A current as from a fully charged battery fills his veins. There is no swerving of thought, no realization of anything in the world. The task shall be accomplished, the Face engraved upon her memory, painted by her hand!

The oil in the lamp fails, and the light goes out. The priest does not heed the darkness. He does not know how long he has sat thus when the unfastened door opens, letting a bar of moonlight fall on the uncarpeted floor.

"They only bloom in the night," says a voice near him, and all around him, filling every corner of the place, floats an odor which renders the atmosphere heavy in a moment, and turns the thoughts of the priest from their new channel to a vision of the past, and a promise written by a hand now dead. *"I will make that perfume to you the sign and assurance of my spirit presence. Be comforted, and look for the sign."*

The priest gazes around him, and remembers.

"Welcome!" he says gratefully.

He stretches out his hands, and a child with dark face and grave, brooding eyes, steals softly to his side, and fills them with strange blossoms with pink petals and hearts of purple hue.

XIV.

MORE STATELY MANSIONS.

Oh, God! I cannot help it, but at times
 They seem to me too narrow all the faiths
 Of this grown world of ours, whose baby eye
 Saw them sufficient. —TENNYSON.

“Father Alpheus, do you believe he would do it?” questioned Jetsam, looking with intent, troubled eyes into the face of the priest.

A small copy of Michael Angelo’s Last Judgment, executed by fingers clever at reproduction, was before the child, and she had asked for, and had been listening to its story. She had shown a deep interest in every detail of the painted scene, and at its close there is a long pause.

The brooding eyes remain fastened on the canvas. The agonized countenances of the damned blanch the face of the gazer, the terribleness of the scene appals her. In her heart there springs up a strong protest, a hot disbelief takes possession of her tender soul. Her troubled eyes are misty with emotion as she asks:

“Do you believe he would do it?”

“That who would do what, child?” asked the priest, whose mind has wandered to other things.

"The Christ," was the slow reply. "You see it wouldn't do any good for them to be punished forever. They would never get out of hell to do any good, even if they were real sorry. Wouldn't it be a good deal better if he would forgive them, and make them happy, and let them begin again? Don't you suppose they were ever so unhappy, and that's why they were so wicked? The folks I know are so much better when they don't feel bad about anything. Why, if grandpa wouldn't forgive me when I've been naughty to him or to brother, and am sorry, I think I should *hate* him, and I shouldn't want to be good any more, and then, of course, I should grow worse all the time till I was as bad as I could be, shouldn't I? And what good would it do grandpa or brother if I was punished always?"

"Why, Father Alpheus, grandpa wouldn't do it, and of course, Christ wouldn't. If he would he don't behave a bit as my Sunday-school teacher says he wants us to, and I don't think it would be fair of him not to, do you? Sometimes when I've been bad grandpa says he'd rather I'd forget about being naughty and think about being good, for folks are best when they're happiest, and I think God agrees with grandpa, don't you?"

The priest looked at the child in silence. In what manner could he answer her? Should he tell her that her disbelief was sin? Should he bid her believe that the Christ who counseled mercy and enjoined forgiveness showed not the one and gave not the other?

For a time longer than he cared to name there

had been burning in his own heart, clamoring in his own brain, questions similar to those of the child. How should he, whose creed declared for everlasting punishment, eternal penance, answer the questions of this little one without shocking her or dishonoring his accepted doctrine?

Jetsam waited through the silence, her face as troubled as that of the priest.

"You do not believe he would do it?" she persisted at length.

"Lord forgive me if I am untrue," said the priest with the desperation of a belief that yet feels itself disloyalty. "but I do not believe he would do it! He *could* not do it. Believe in a just God, child, a God of love who could not do it. Go, now, but come again soon. I would be alone."

Without a word the child left the room, but there was a look of relief on her dark face, a soft light in her brooding eyes.

Father Alpheus was alone. Before his mind stalked questions, doubts, denials, the very existence of which he knew would be regarded as heresy by the intelligence to which he had subscribed, and which, by his calling and teaching, he admitted as his guide.

For centuries those whom he was bound to consider learned and wise had brought their knowledge and their erudition to prove the love and wisdom of a God whose punishments have no end. All through the ages the justice of life-long penance had been taught by the order whose robe he wore, whose creed he preached to his people. He knew that for centuries theology had

sent its arrows of ecclesiasticism so thickly into the air that the atmosphere of free thought and simple belief had been stifled by them. He realized that the dark picture of eternal punishment instituted by a God whom human reason had exhausted itself in trying to make merciful as well as just, had been drawn by master hands, shaded by skilful intellects, and received by philosophical intelligences as an undying masterpiece whose legitimacy could never be disputed.

Now the hand of a child had touched this structure whose foundations were ecclesiastical dogmas, its walls the beliefs of men, and had rocked it to its base. A child's breath had blown aside the sophistries which mystified the mind and confused the reason, and there stood in all its nakedness, its simple severity, its undeniable, the uselessness and the injustice of everlasting punishment; aye, more, of long continued penance. Of what use was that which had served its purpose? When by the fire of suffering the dross was burned away, when the heart was chastened and made repentant by the flames of conscience, of what further value was the purging heat? Could God be a parent of love in this world and a judge of insatiable vengeance in the next? Would he add hate to sin, and turn his creatures from him forever? What careful owner of a soiled garment after cleansing it remembered that it was not always clean? And if God cleansed and forgot, must man choose to remember and suffer? Would it not, indeed, be treason against the generosity which would blot out if one persisted in doing penance for that which had disappeared?

The mind of the thinker went back to the Christ who walked and talked in sunlit spaces under the warm skies of the East. Surely he taught that sin must bring suffering, but where did he teach that sin was not its own punishment in its effects upon the mind and heart, and no specific, condign thing dealt out at the end of the earth-life, or enjoined during the years when the mortal has not put on immortality? How could a Christ who was truth incarnate and sincerity enfleshed condemn infinitely for finite sins, and grant no opportunity for return to the ways of righteousness though the heart might break, and the soul bow itself to the earth in repentance, and still talk of tenderness which should forgive not seven times, but seventy times seven? Surely, one must dishonor Jesus of Nazareth if he would credit the theologians.

And then in the mind of the priest a new thought was born. *A life-long sorrow upon earth does not honor God.* Nothing honors God which is not uplifting. Sorrow is uplifting only as the root from which may spring fresh spiritual life. Christ came that man might have life, and have it more abundant. Continued sorrow, eternal penance are negation, or that from which grows unrighteousness. It is not man's duty to remain in the valley of humiliation though sins black as midnight and foul as hell may have dragged him there, but to rise and walk towards the light. Is not man dishonoring God when he refuses the joy which recreates, and lives in the sorrow which destroys? Who shall feel himself honored when his offer of that which is of royal benefit is refused for that which is of constant disintegration?

"Continued penance is carnal. Happiness is holiness."

The priest speaks the words aloud, and the sound seems to fill all the air of the room. He looks about him in half protest at the declaration which he yet feels to be true.

He knows that he is guilty of that which he himself a year before would have condemned as heresy. He realizes what will be the decision of those by whose system and decrees he has sworn to abide. He is aware that from the richly robed Pope in the Vatican, from crimson-garbed cardinals, from gray-gowned friars, from sable-robed priests, from pale-browed nuns, from white-lipped sisters of mercy, from penance emaciated ascetics of his own order would come a loud-voiced denial of his newly born creed. That from solemn-visaged, somber-gowned preachers, teachers, and followers of those who believed not in the hierarchy which ordained him priest, but who spread and emphasized a doctrine which was in essence the same, would issue an appalled protest at his suddenly conceived conviction. He remembers that down through the ages has come the belief that the greatest happiness must come through the most long-enduring pain. But there alone with the silence and his own soul, the priest comes face to face with the truth and is freed from mental and spiritual thralldom.

"Continued penance is carnal. Happiness is holiness."

With unafraid conviction he repeats the words.

Against the creed of Pope and cardinal and priest,

against the authority of clerical apologists and dogmatists, arose in ghastly phalanx the ranks of those who have sinned through unhappiness, been made mad through disaster.

Under cover of each night were fleeing those who, in the desperation of their own tortured lives had taken other lives. He tried to recall the names of the happy people who had been murderers, and found not one name coming to his memory. Secluded as was his life he had listened many times while through the grated lattice had come tales of spotless virtue sold to those whose gold would buy the bread which honesty had failed to win. His endeavor to remember a single instance where happiness had exchanged a life of purity for one of vice was fruitless. He called to mind hard, coarsened faces of cities in which he had lived and visited where hunger had reared its head and all the graces which refine, the charms which stimulate, had been denied. The souls of those dwellers in the byways of neglect had been drugged with unhappiness, and were dead in trespasses and sin.

Floating in upon many tides were myriads who had plunged beneath the waves as their only refuge from despair. Did their histories, when revealed, show that which would have kept them in touch with the magnetic currents of life, the wells of joy from which to have drunk would have been life? The reply was inevitable.

Found by thousands every year, lying in rooms into which it was no one's business or pleasure to enter with ministration, were those with tightly grasped vials,

their contents furnished with means insufficient for food, but sufficient for death, whom desperation had destroyed.

On the streets of cities, holding up tiny hands for the dole of the beggar, were numberless little ones, with cunning, unchildish faces, driven from their homes to become infant mendicants by those whose narrow and joyless existence had made all modes of robbery seem legitimate. Could he recall any joyous child with the look and manner of these tiny supplicants? Did he remember any happy parents who had sent forth these unnatural messengers? Not one!

The full vessel could hold no more. In hearts brimmed with contentment, shot through with joy, vibrant with strong currents of hopeful purpose, the madness which is the mother of sin, the despair which is the parent of crime, finds no room for germination. It was when the dwelling was swept and garnished, empty of rich meanings and glorious purpose, that the seven devils entered, and made the last state of the dismantled soul worse than the first. Truly, sin was the curse and the unbearable weight of life, and the great generator of sin was misery.

He realized that unholiness grew as naturally from unhappiness as the grain of wheat from the wheat kernel.

More sorrow for the saving of the world? More penance, and fasting, and humiliation? Great God, no! but a full-volumed wave of happiness and help which should sweep before it the horrors of daily torment and hourly torture, the dull negation of misery

from which springs the positive activity of crime, as the flowing tide bears the seaweed on its bosom, as the tornado forces before it the trees of the forest, the grass of the plain!

He thought of his own life. In the frenzy of a moment, the passion of an hour, he had committed a crime. Bitterly and with all his soul had he repented. By years of isolation and of penance he had endeavored to atone for that crime, and thus to honor God. Had he honored God? Was God truly honored by a man, having repented unto righteousness, remaining, after his purging, in the valley of humiliation where the heart may rust itself into disbelief, the brain turn itself to insanity? He had prostituted his intelligence, wasted his knowledge, caused his heart to die in inaction. To what end? Did not man sin against God by sinning against himself? Aye, was not this the only way in which a man could injure God?

He had fostered negation, added to the volume of misery which curses the world, and binds it to the wheel of discontent and despair. In trying to atone for sin he has sinned.

One conviction stands out clearly and not to be dissipated. *Life long penance is sin; enduring grief is wickedness. Happiness is holiness, and from it spring the holy things which make for life.* For him the law of life has been rewritten, the message of God retranslated. *Repentance is a means, not an end. The redemption of man is with himself through the attributes which God has given him. Life, not negation, is the saving force; the ending of sorrow is the beginning*

of joy which worketh unto righteousness. Man must be righteous unto himself, and thereby save himself by the God within him.

"I have been blind in my folly, and sinful for want of knowledge," exclaimed the thinker in the stillness. "I have harnessed the force which should have gone forth to work the work of redemption. Now let the red blood course quickly through my veins, and the currents of my being set towards that which makes for the joy that is righteousness!"

The moon comes out from behind a cloud and rests in a shimmer of silver upon the floor. A sudden breeze floats in at the window and stirs with a gentle sound the dead leaves and blossoms which a child has left behind in the fireless grate. Round about the man with his new thoughts and fresh beliefs hovers a fragrance which makes him lift his eyes with a glad look of welcome within them, and hold out to the perfume-scented air hands which though they grasp nothing do not feel empty.

XV.

LIFE'S RESETTING.

I will not choose what many men desire,
Because I will not jump with common spirits,
And rank me with the barbarous multitudes.

—SHAKESPEARE.

Darkness was in the glens and twilight on the hills. Night birds amid forest shadows were answering each others' cry. The evening star was growing less pale. The young moon, a burnished crescent, hung lonely and beautiful in the wide sky spaces of the West. The sound of a tumbling and moaning sea came through the stillness of the hour of falling dew.

The sketching tools were gathered together, and rested on the ground. The two artists remained on the crest of the hill, from which they had watched the sun set, Vancourt bolt upright, his hands deep in the pockets of his gray trousers, Miss Trescott leaning against a tree, her fingers tightly interlacing each other.

The girl raised her shaded eyes to the dim face of her companion, and asked a question. "You can give me an answer to-night," she had said.

"You have asked that I would be your teacher in Rome," Vancourt replied. "You have declared that

without my further instruction you could feel no certainty about your progress, no surety about your future. I long ago made a rule which I had thought never to break, to receive absolutely no pupils. I have decided, on one condition, to make an exception in your favor; a condition which would seem to the ordinary person so harsh, probably so needless, that only a fool would name it. It is because I do not consider you an ordinary person that I venture to put it before you. Remember, however, that I urge nothing, proffer no advice. Let your decision be unbiased by any word or thought of mine. You know my moods and manners. I have nothing of the world's suavity, know none of the meaningless phrases of the polite. I promise nothing of gentleness, and, as you have already learned, I am not given to the slightest toleration. I would lay before you not only this condition, but all the feelings of my heart on the subject which most vitally concerns you, that if in future our lives should touch, there may be no shadow of misunderstanding between us."

"Go on; speak quickly," cried his listener, in the earnest, impulsive way which was natural to her.

Vancourt continued as though he had not heard her.

"I would never consent to become the instructor of one whose foundations were not so deeply laid as to preclude any failure which might come because of his own acts, or failure to act. The brush of the artist who wields it under my direction must be, and remain to him, the one tool in the world. There must be no intermittent effort, no distracted attention. I will

teach no unconsecrated hand to do its half-best, no partially devoted soul to paint out its mutilated visions.

“He who is not the slave of art and a lover of his chains, is not art’s true interpreter. The painter who feels not this bondage is free and impatient, untrammelled and weak. It is the whole current of one’s being flowing in a single stream which bears all before it. Man talks of mastering Art. He is not the truest artist, not the strongest painter, unless Art has mastered him. He is a pretender who talks of cultivating a taste for painting. The real artist can no more help painting than the sun can help shining, or the moon giving her light. He who by conscious effort generates a taste for painting is a dauber; he has not the first essential of the artist. Pretenders who copy from other men are generated in hordes. Painters are born one in a century. Attempt to tell no story with your brush unless the tale is burning itself into form, demanding itself into utterance, kindling itself into shape, and you have only to obey, and paint. Do not go to Rome with any half desire which is the pale makeshift of the power which will not be baffled, the conception which demands shape, the longing which must be appeased in accomplishment. If concentration is not joy, and the giving of all the gaining of all which your heart holds most dear, say no more of Rome. There are already triflers and idlers enough within her borders.”

“I follow and understand you,” cried the listener in an eager tone. “But the condition! Pray name the condition.”

The hands of the artist, withdrawn from his pockets, were fiercely twisting his red beard. The look on his face, which she could not see, was that of one who is about to speak words which mean sure success or certain ruin for himself. His voice was a little harder and colder than usual as he said:

“Give me your solemn promise that for ten years you will fill your time, your heart, your mind exclusively with Art; that no distractions of love or lovers shall disturb you; that you will not accept from any man the least attention which might suggest marriage, or encourage love making; that at the end of the ten years you will marry no one but a painter whose work has been pronounced by competent judges superior to your own. That no frivolities of any kind shall come between you and your work—promise me this as one promises who means to keep his word, and I will become your teacher as long as you stand in need of my instructions.”

Miss Trescott looked at him in a puzzled way which the darkness made it impossible for him to note. Why did he talk so earnestly, so almost angrily of love and lovers? What hint had she ever given that these things interested her? Had love proved a foe to him that he spoke of it so bitterly?

She asked these questions of herself, and then of him. The reply came with the steadiness and readiness of words many times gone over in the mind, and whose meaning was branded into the consciousness.

“Genius cannot be killed altogether,” said the cold voice, “but it can be muzzled and hampered, and its

most effective foe is love. The lover is never more than half the artist. His mind is drawn to sensuous delights, warped by feelings, which disintegrate and dissipate, by pleasures which enervate and weaken. He who does not find sufficient pleasure in Art is not worthy to be one of her votaries. He who would be great"—repeating his favorite maxim—"must meet the conditions of greatness. If, when your judgment and taste are of no uncertain quality, when your touch is accurate and sure, when the years have given their practice and success its power; if then, when you have wrought worthily, should one who has wrought if not more worthily, still with larger success, wed you, he would himself have reached a height from which he would look at your work with true appreciation, and expect not from one whose genius was so apparent the thoughts of the matron or the cares of the mother. He would not replace the sacred tools which so few may effectively handle by the common implements which multitudes may wield. It is the world's way to play at both Art and love, and to be sufficient in neither. If you prefer the world's way allow no influence of mine to interfere with your preference. I have given you my condition; my only one. You will perhaps need time before you answer."

Miss Trescott's reply was grave and decided:

"Why should I require time to think of that which has been thought out a hundred times? What you say of love sounds true enough, but no thought of love, or fear of its diversions, disturbs me. I have told you of the one great longing which possesses me; the longing

to paint out my soul. I have said that the woman that remains could make no sacrifice to Art, because all that she has would be gladly given. I have in no wise changed my mind. Why, then, should I require time? I answer you here, now. *I accept your conditions most willingly.* I am grateful to you; most grateful. Words cannot make you understand how glad I am. Let me become as nearly as I may all that your pupil should be. In no other way can I adequately thank you. Let us talk of Rome. How the thought of it thrills me! Can we go soon? And yet this place has become so dear!"

"It is damp here," was the reply, "and the yacht will be waiting. We can talk of Rome to-morrow."

Vancourt saw his companion to the boat, and stood watching the yacht till it was lost in the sea fog which was rising, and then began, with his old habit, to pace the sands.

He had purposely waited till dusk to say the words which had come in answer to Miss Trescott's request. He had not wished her to see his face while he spoke of the things which for many days had been filling his heart, burning in his brain.

He had vowed to work out in no coward's way a penance for his disloyalty. He would not flee from temptation, but face it, grapple with it, become stronger for the struggle. And the mistress should receive another jewel for her crown, one whose radiance was of first water, whose value should endure; for he felt with strong conviction that never again, even for brief hours, would the frivolities and smallness of exist-

ence lay hold with any effective grasp upon the young painter, that his dream, which until now he had never dared to believe might be realized, of a companion who should understand his aspirations, partake of his enthusiasms, and equal him in consecration, would come true.

With this he vowed to be content; nay, rather, to rejoice in the knowledge.

But as he paced the sands in the chilling dampness which he did not heed, he was amazed and angered at the sensation which his pupil's reply had given him.

Could he have dictated her answer he would not have changed one syllable, and yet had there been one sign that through the summer weeks she had begun to learn a lesson other than that of draughting and coloring, of gradations and values; if by any hesitating word or inadvertent sentence she had betrayed that by the intuition which asks no time for its affirmations and no reasons for its conclusions, she had learned of, and in the slightest way had responded to, that tenderness which never showed itself in deed or word; he knew, had this been true, that never so fair and sweet a thing had summer brought to man as this summer had given to him.

His heart ached for, starved without, that which he would in nowise allow himself to try to gain.

Ten years. She would never know that the condition was made as much to guard himself as her. Ten years in which to undream the dream which had come near to being his undoing, to wipe out weakness, to strangle passion, to atone by double devotion for his

disastrous falling from grace. Ten years to break the meshes which bound him, and grow freer and stronger for the conflict.

For her ten years of steady advancement, and then, perchance, if some one who had soared even above the heights which she had gained should love her and be loved again, to give her away as his friend and pupil—

He became suddenly aware that the mist had permeated his garments, making him shiver through and through, and that the heavily rolling waves had a sound which sent a lonely feeling to his very soul. He shook himself as though to repulse some tormenting thing.

"Always of her," he muttered angrily. "I see no shapes for my canvas, dream no dreams which shall blossom into realities. Nothing apart from her has any power to hold my imagination, or fire my brain. But, "with a gleam of hope on the face which was lifted toward the mist-hidden sky," passion is an ephemeral thing. On this one point poets and writers all agree. It burns itself down to ashes, and becomes a dead thing. It is friendship which endures, ennobles, strengthens. They all declare it. Ten years. In that time the lad will have become a man; will have gained place and name, and what is a woman's word against the demands of her heart? But I say she will be true," angrily, as though another had doubted her. "She will not falter or swerve, or do a dishonorable thing. She has entered the Temple of Art, her feet shod with sandals of consecration, and wearing the garment of devotion. She will be true. I could swear it!"

The sea still tumbled and sighed, on the distant rocks the surf beat tumultuously. A dark cloud had risen, and thunder was heard. A flash of lightning lit up the sea and the sands, and, awakened from his reverie by its glow, the artist bethought himself of the time of night, and turned his footsteps homeward.

The long, languorous days of summer had burned and waned themselves away. September crickets called with their rasping, desolate sound amid the grass of the shorn meadows. Such grain as grew on the rocky soil was being gathered in for the threshing. The early frosts were beginning to give the forests a foretaste of the glory which would ere long set them aglow. Soon the early Maine winter would put an end to outdoor sketching, and plans for the future must be made.

Vancourt had never broached to Miss Trescott the subject of his desire and resolve concerning her future, but, as though to meet his wish and purpose, through all the late summer and the beginning of autumn her soul had turned with infinite longing toward the Old World, birthplace and home of Art, and when one day the older artist spoke of his determination to go to Rome immediately after leaving the Maine coast, she entreated him to remain her teacher there as he had been among the New England hills.

XVI.

THE STRESS OF NEW CONDITIONS.

One of the grandest things in having rights is that, being your rights, you may give them up.—GEORGE MACDONALD.

As night shows where one moon is,
A hand's-breadth of pure light and bliss,
So life's night gives my lady birth
And my eyes hold her! What is worth
The rest of Heaven, the rest of earth?

—BROWNING.

A farmer boy was now employed to guide the yacht which bore Miss Trescott between the island and the mainland.

The young artist, compassionate of his added loneliness, went often to sit with Victor Devereux's uncle.

The existence of Pierre Devereux showed forth with remarkable clearness the sharp contrasts which the years may set against each other.

He who had once been accustomed to all the sensuous delights of the world's gayest capitals, now lived his life in the tiny house, amid the stillness of that barren, New England island, with the sound of sea surges for companionship, the sight of drifting gulls for recreation.

Miss Trescott's visits were the brightest spots in his somber days.

Naturally the two talked much of Victor; of the news in his letters, his progress, and his prospects.

"He is working, always working, with the world's applause in his thought," exclaimed Pierre Devereux. "He will succeed, and that largely."

"I am ever working with one hope in my heart," had been the boy's written words; words whose meaning had been entirely misinterpreted.

One evening when Miss Trescott entered the Devereux cottage she noticed an unwonted air of excitement in the manner of its occupant.

On the table beside him was an open box, around which lay several papers.

When the visitor had received his greeting, and was seated, the musician said:

"A surprising thing had come to my knowledge. My sister left some private papers in her desk which I have never looked at till two hours since. I had not supposed they possessed any special interest or importance save such as the fact of their belonging to her would naturally give them in my sight; and I have a horror of handling things which have been touched by people who are dead; but to-day in my restlessness I opened the box containing the papers, and read some of the letters which it held. I never knew till I did this the name of the man my sister married. One of the conditions imposed upon her and her lover was that neither should ever mention the former name of the husband, and that both should so far as possible

forget that he ever bore any name save that of the noble house with which his marriage allied him. My sister was a loyal soul, and I was never at home, and so knew almost nothing of family matters.

“Look at this photograph and these letters, and tell me to what conclusion they lead you.”

Miss Trescott took the faded picture in her hand, exclaiming the moment her eyes fell upon it:

“How like Victor it is!”

Beneath the photograph was written the name, Archibald Trescott; the name of one whose history the artist had one evening told to the musician.

Host and visitor exchanged glances, and then Miss Trescott took up a letter, a passionate love-letter, through which she only partially glanced, feeling a double treachery in reading an epistle not meant for her perusal since both its writer and receiver were dead, but which she knew was indited by a man in ordinary standing and rank in life; one who had not been considered, did not consider himself, as altogether clean; one who held himself as in no sense worthy of the love of her whom he coveted, but who had, in the strength which her belief in him gave, abandoned unrighteous ways, and exultantly proclaimed love victor in the struggle for a soul.

The letter was signed Archie Trescott.

Other letters of a later date, addressed to the same person in the same hand, were signed François Devereux, and in a postscript following the earliest signing of this name were the words:

“How strange it seems that Archibald Trescott has

become François Devereux, but I have not made the former name one of which to be proud. There is no one to regret its loss, and the winning of yourself, my darling, is worth a sacrifice—if sacrifice it be—a million times greater.

“We will never write or speak my old name again. A friend told me some time ago that one bearing it went down on a steamer bound from New York to Liverpool. We will suppose (as my family probably do if any of its members saw a list of the lost), that it was I who was drowned.

“Good-bye to Archie the lover. Bid the adoring husband, François, welcome, my Queen.”

The photograph and letters lay in the lap of the artist. With her accustomed habit of thought-transportation she had left the island cottage, and was in a room of the western farmhouse which had been her birthplace and childhood's home. A pale-faced woman was standing by a bedside speaking solemn words of promise, and a child, her bright hair mingling on the pillow with locks so like her own, was pledging herself to care tenderly for a life, or lives, which perhaps had no existence.

It was clear that the time for redeeming that pledge had come; clear that Victor Devereux was the son of Archibald Trescott.

And Victor Devereux, who but for the anger of a relative would have been heir to all that she now possessed, was living in Paris on borrowed money; living miserably she knew, understanding intuitively the pride which would never purchase comfort at another's

expense, even though each borrowed penny was to be carefully repaid. This must be remedied at once. At least half of the Trescott property—which was not large, but sufficient to modestly maintain one person through life—must be made over to Archie Trescott's son; to her friend and cousin. She spoke to Pierre Devereux in her eager, impetuous way of this desire, explaining, exclaiming, urging haste in the transaction.

It was not the first time that the thought of aiding the young musician had come to her. She had been casting about in her mind for some pretext that would enable her to put money into his hands. It seemed to her so fortunate that the letters and picture should have been found just at this juncture.

"Tell me how it can be quickly done," she cried. "I suppose we must have a lawyer. We will set someone about it to-morrow. How I wish we could begin to-night!"

The musician shook his head.

"You are most kind," he said, a little proudly, "but Victor would not accept the gift, and I, who so heartily appreciate your generosity and thoughtfulness, should not wish him to do so. We could not rob, or even partially deplete, a lady, especially a lady who honors us by her friendship."

Miss Trescott expostulated and explained, telling of that deathbed scene, and of her own and her mother's promise. It was only just that Victor should have the money. By all moral laws it belonged to him. And was he not her cousin? Did not this fact alone give

her the right to aid him? Was it not the duty, even if it were not the pleasure, of relatives to help each other? Even though the property were all fairly hers it would be her duty to aid him.

But the musician was firm.

"I could not consent to his receiving that which was voluntarily kept from his father," he said. "He will soon be able to take his place in the world, and to earn money for himself. I think it best that he should not be asked to receive the gift—for such it would be, though your generosity would give it another name—I thank you more than I can say in his name and in my own. I am sure that he would be touched and gratified by the thought of that which you would do, but would agree with me in declining your too-kind offer, of which I shall sometime tell him. It will give him a pleasure that no money could ever bestow to learn that he may call you cousin. Let this relationship suffice for yourself as it will for him."

Miss Trescott left the cottage perplexed and troubled. She was somewhat hurt as well as a good deal disappointed at Pierre Devereux's decision. She felt that her newly discovered cousin should at least have an opportunity of accepting or refusing the proposed assistance.

But she would not yet abandon her idea. There must be some direct or indirect way of benefiting the lad. She remembered her mother's instruction to go to Father Alpheus for needed advice and counsel, and determined to put the whole matter before the priest,

and beg him to find a way to give Victor Devereux that which she considered his.

Pierre Devereux had never initiated his nephew into the drudgery which a technical knowledge of music entails. The memory of the time when he himself had delved through that which had proved so irksome to his soul, seemed to have entirely left him. Both he and the lad played so instinctively that dwelling on scales and notes was torment to them; so much a torment to one who the moment his fingers touched the bow went soaring into an upper atmosphere of sound as naturally as the singing lark wings her flight into the blue, that he had never given Victor that training which would have saved him weeks of slavery in Paris.

But the old *maestro* under whose care the lad had, through Vancourt's influence, been placed, though recognizing genius as surely as the connoisseur of precious stones recognizes a jewel of first water, was yet himself less the artist than the instructor, particular in his teachings, precise in his requirements.

"Ah, little one," he said when he had heard the lad play, and had given him a long and searching examination, "you have much madness but little method. That is not a thing to at all discourage. The method can be acquired, the madness never. All will go well, but there must be much work, long patience. The birds of prey will pick you to pieces as the sparrow picks the cherry from the stone. Though you outdid Orpheus himself, envy would tear your reputation to rags did you not play learnedly as well as eloquently.

The very heavenliness of your music is the thing which would destroy you. The mediocre performer may play as he will. He displaces no one, no critic thinks him worth more than a paragraph. Musicians have no fear of him, no jealousy of him, and leave him alone. But he who makes mad by his strains, who turns men's heads, and heats their hearts, as you will do, must be thrown from his pedestal—if he be allowed to gain one—by the cry that he is unscientific, incorrect. This would be the shred on which the vultures would fix their claws. But we will see to that. They shall have nothing to grasp. It will be stupid work. I never deceive. Stupid as for the birds to be tied to rules, obliged to work along fixed lines. But it would be a crime for one with your power to leave any loophole for failure. Study, my little one, and practice as I shall direct, and ah, the great God! what a furore you shall make!"

And so through days which seemed never-ending the young musician sat, dwelling on tiresome technicalities, learning the details which are usually the student's first tasks. The irksomeness of it tired him unutterably, but he never shirked, faltered, or complained.

"Ah, my son, you are the pupil who will succeed," the old professor would exclaim, to be answered by the boy's slow, grave smile, and a brightening of the dark eyes.

Miss Trescott had written him letters so filled with her personality, so redolent of the peculiar perfume that she used, that after their perusal he would walk

the floor in an ecstasy of feeling, and then draw from his violin such strains that the passers-by, held enchanted beneath his window, would gesticulate and exclaim, and wonder why one who played like that was quartered in so poor a part of the city.

In his replies to these letters, and in his correspondence with his uncle, he spoke for the most part of his work, his hopes, and his determinations; never of the homesickness that tortured his heart and stole the strength from his whole being. For he was maddeningly homesick. He had no desire for anything that Paris contained save the knowledge which would make him something in one pair of eyes, important in one girl's estimation. He was forever thinking of summer seas over which his yacht had glided with its one passenger who was all the world to him; of an island which was enchanted because she had set foot upon it, and breathed its atmosphere; of rosy dawns ushering in new days when he should see her, and hear her speak; of moonlit nights and star-illumined dusks when she sat in the lonely little house making it more regal than a marble mansion could have been without her presence; of the white-robed figure, of sunny hair and frank blue eyes; of witty words and musical tones, of high prophecies and bracing beliefs; of a thousand alluring things which had touched his barren life into beauty, in which he now no longer had part or lot. He would not have forgotten these things for untold gold, and yet the remembrance of them almost drove him wild, and kindled in his heart a longing which wasted his body like a deadly illness.

In the night stillness of his room he poured out his soul in missives which were destroyed ere the morning light came in through the casement, never one of them finding its way to her who inspired them. It afforded him some relief to put on paper the new language which love had brought him. The words which he actually sent seemed to him trite and commonplace, and were as small a part of his heart as one star is of the firmament. When the burning words had been written and destroyed, his violin would be drawn to his shoulder, and a melody of his own composition would be sent out on the air. Then the instrument would be lowered, the player's face would be laid lovingly against it for an instant, and to it he would half say, half sob: "Good-night, my friend that understands. We have said good-night to our Lily Queen and Rose Sovereign."

This life wore sadly upon the lad. He had taken lodgings in a poor, ill ventilated part of the city, and seldom sought gay streets and bright environments. Unable to partake with anything like heartiness of the food which he allowed himself, this late wanderer in broad-lying sunshine, this inhaler of breezes sent up from the salt-waved sea, this seeker of all Nature's far places and free wide spaces, was like the mountain eagle in the hunter's cage, or the wild bear of the North in the showman's pavilion.

As the weeks went on he grew pale and emaciated. In the hand which handled the bow the cords became plainly visible and the blue veins showed with startling distinctness. He grew faint one day while going through an exercise before the old professor, who with

his numerous cares had little time for looking after the physical welfare of his pupils. The teacher gazed at him with darkened brow, and when he had recovered took him severely to task for his mode of living.

"Mon Dieu!" he exclaimed with real concern and much irritation. "You are wrong, criminal, bad! You take no care of yourself. You do not sleep, you eat not enough! You will fail, and be yourself to blame. And you have not the right to fail. The good God will not forgive you, I shall not forgive you, you will not forgive yourself. Let this foolishness be done with. You are *triste*. You long for the home. Well, you will soon, if you starve and destroy not yourself, go out into the big, brave world, and it will become your home, and the fame will come, and when you go to the old home the place will look little and lonely, and the people will take off their hats and do the homage to him who went out a humble boy and comes back a great musician. Come, eat, and drink, and be strong. A few weeks and I will place you where you will see that which will make you forget. Has your room the comfortable things? Do you buy that which you can eat? I must tell the madame to look well after you. I will not have you thus."

The words of the professor had an immediate effect.

Fail! And *she* expected him to succeed. He recalled her words: "Go, and conquer the world. You will be the Cæsar of the musical sphere, the Alexander of the realm of sounds." The remembrance touched him into many resolves. His one dominant thought was that she must not be disappointed. Unto this

thought was due his sudden desire for sleep, and appetite, and strength.

He earlier sought his couch, but could not force sleep, and lay for hours with the sound of free seawaters in his ears, and waking visions before his eyes. He determinedly ate more of his coarse food, and when he could not swallow it, now and then tempted his palate with fresh and more dainty viands. Although he did not become strong, the extreme pallor left his face, and there was more life in his grip on the bow.

Monotonously, tiresomely, but none the less surely the weeks went on, and one day in early October the *maestro* laid his hand on the shoulder of his pupil, and asked him if he would like to choose his own stage name.

"Why should I choose one so soon?" asked the lad, looking up from the music sheet before him.

"Because in two weeks you are to play at a concert given in honor of many of the nobles of France and Italy," was the master's reply.

The boy paled a little, and laid his violin aside with hands that trembled.

"Prepare for triumph, little one. You will achieve it," said the old man kindly.

The boy took the hand of his teacher in both his own and kissed it.

"But the name?" asked the professor, with a husky sound in his voice.

"It shall be Carloné, if you please," was the reply.

Helen Trescott had once said in his hearing that if she were going on the stage she would adopt the name of Carloné.

XVII.

CONSEQUENCES.

Is it so bad, then, to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh.—EMERSON.

“What is happiness? Not gain and fulfilled wishes, for these but create yearnings for more gain, and breed more wishes. Not human love which chance and change may destroy. I have truly said that happiness is holiness, but I have felt the Christ in my heart, and the other side of the divine shield stands revealed. Holiness is happiness. Lord, thou hast shown thyself to me, but not unto many of the race will thy visioned Face be revealed. How shalt thou be brought straight home to their souls? I yearn to be about the business which I know not how to begin. My learning serves me not. My reason has but led me into quagmires of doubt and despair. Make me thine almoner for meeting this pressing hunger of the world with something simple enough, great enough, sure enough to make and to keep men happy unto righteousness. The universe is full of knowledge concerning thee. The Churches are numerous, and rich in rhetoric and ritual, but men travail, and suffer, and die. SHOW THEM GOD!

Behold, I know nothing. I stand and wait. Teach me that wherewith I shall lead the people unto that holiness which will give them real life. Light! *Heart* light, O my God!"

Thus pondered and prayed the priest day after day, looking out over the sea. One day as he stood with the waves coming close to his feet, light steps glided across the sands, and Jetsam's voice said, as she put a thin volume into his hand:

"It is a strange book, grandpa says, all about mystic folderol and moonshiny people. You are so wise you will understand it, I am sure. Perhaps you will tell me about it some day."

She slipped away, leaving the book in his hand.

To his people Father Alpheus spoke that which was in his heart; spoke to hearers who, bound by theological fetters, chained by traditions held by the teachings of all their years, were afraid to accept doctrines which seemed too fair to be holy, too joyous to be true. They, so long reasoned for, so firmly grounded in thought obedience, resisted the desire to hear more of the things which fascinated them, and by their very magnetism made them afraid of them as wiles of the evil one. They looked with apprehensive glances into each other's faces when their pastor, so well beloved, so little understood, passed them deep in thought, but with the perplexed look gone from his countenance, whispering to each other in pitying tones:

"His sickness has turned his brain. He is a little mad."

Knowledge of his disquieting teachings came to the

bishop of the diocese, and the priest was summoned before his superior to answer to the charge of heresy.

Feeling like one who smites with feeble, impotent hands the stones of a towering wall, but whose heart must be satisfied by such defense as can be made for the faith that is within it, he essayed to answer the charge. But the throat of the man so accustomed to his own sole companionship grew dry and husky, his speech was faint and faltering, and no fitting words came to his mind. His hand, seeking in the pocket of his coat for a handkerchief to wipe away the drops of perspiration which covered his face, drew forth, with the square of linen, a spray of flowers and leaves which his child-friend had hidden with the handkerchief as a parting gift, and around the bishop and the man who stood before him floated the perfume which had been promised as the sign and symbol of a presence which could not be seen.

The priest was no longer unable to find words. He lifted his head and with eloquence born of high thought and burning desire poured out sentences that caused his listener to think that it would indeed be a misfortune if the speaker must be put aside from the ranks of the ritualists. His story was well told, his reasons rationally given, the plea for nobler things nobly urged, although the speaker knew that his words were like billows dashing against a rock, wind thrusting itself upon a mountain of granite.

The remonstrances, explanations, and reasonings of the Church official left him with a patient, unconvinced look, but far from unmoved. He knew what

adherence to his new line of thought meant, but, like the soldier in battle whose limbs tremble from physical fear, but whose moral courage will not allow him to turn back, he stood firmly by his new standard.

He was commanded to fast and to pray earnestly for light, and then dismissed for the time being.

The learned bishop, as he looked after him, echoed the words of the untaught farmers, "He must be somewhat mad."

The priest, so unused to contact with the great world, feeling half afraid of its materialism and clear-headed, hard-handed manipulation, would fain have turned to his old secure hiding behind ancient beliefs, and withdrawn to the quiet life among his books in the little house on the barren shore, but he knew that were his pastor's robe still allowed to clothe him, and his fitness for his office to remain unquestioned, that never again could he pour for others the old wine of ecclesiasticism, never again speak without a shudder of abhorrence of a God who would punish forever, never again sit before the latticed window to listen to the confessions of men to man, and feel that he should have part or lot in the hearing of offences or the absolution of sins.

He must go out from the Mother Church. The knowledge was exceedingly sad unto him.

He loved the pomp and authority of the institution in whose utter wisdom he had believed. His artistic temperament and reverential soul delighted in her color and magnificence, her costly fittings, the roll of her

Latin sentence, the chanting of her songs of prayer, the incense which rose from her altars.

His cross was heavy.

A month after his interview with the bishop he was divested of his office of priest in the Romish Church.

He was bewildered by the strangeness of standing alone after the many years in which individual decision had been considered unwise and dangerous. His Church had been to him a home. He had never realized how strong and safe was its shelter till he stood at the entrance of a path leading from it, and knew that his route must henceforth lie along highways of whose inns and guide posts he possessed no knowledge.

When, after a sermon of farewell which caused a rain of tears to fall over the faces of his hearers, he sailed away from the parish which mourned but was half afraid of him, only Jetsam knew that it was his intention to go for a time to the place spoken of in the book which she had brought him, the hermitage of a mystic brotherhood, and thence to Rome.

The man's old self had surged away from him as outgoing waves surge away from the shore. All thoughts of personality were drowned in the consuming desire to feed the people, the starving, despairing people, with the food which he, after years of emptiness, had eaten.

Only one of his former thoughts now held its old place in his heart.

The Face which had never left his memory, whose beauty, power, and wonder had lost no whit of their

hold upon him, this Face must be painted; painted by his child.

"The vision which will enable her to do this," he said, "will be a gift that kings might envy, and the picture be to the world that to which all its jewels will be but tawdry baubles. This vision must be her dowry! The only one her father can bestow."

There was no reason for delay. No task or kindred claimed him. He went to the brotherhood.

One day, seven months later, he found himself climbing the many stairs that led to Helen Trescott's studio, high up in one of those tall, shabby houses whose rooms are mostly let to sculptors and artists.

Before either had left the Maine shore Miss Trescott had approached the priest on the subject of her wished-for bestowal of money upon Victor Devereux, but Father Alpheus had agreed with the island musician that it was better for the present to allow the lad the stimulus of making his own way. He believed, with Pierre Devereux, that the boy would refuse the gift. The matter should, at any rate, he decided, be put aside till after the concert of which Victor had written as the occasion of his first appearance before an audience.

And so the girl artist had sailed away with the matter so near her heart unsettled, trying to be satisfied with the priest's promise that it should, at a later date, be adjusted.

Father Alpheus had not been forgetful, or unmindful of the instructions given in that letter which was locked away with his few treasures, or heedless of the

wish of the artist to do all that was possible for the son of Archie Trescott. He would, if possible, meet to the uttermost the generous desires of mother and daughter, but at present the musical novice must go undisturbed to the trial of his powers.

And then had come the summons from the bishop, and the matter of the distribution of the Trescott property waited for the attention of one who was absorbed in other things.

XVIII.

MASTER TOUCHES.

Blessed is he who has found his work; let him ask no other blessedness. He has a work, a life-purpose; he has found it, and will follow it.—CARLYLE.

During the first winter of her stay in Rome Helen Trescott painted a little scene which was instantly noticed and purchased by one whose preferences were the keynote to which the fancies of the fashionable world were attuned.

The sketch, fragrant with its suggestions of salt air and country freshness, hung on the wall of the great man's home, and was seen and admired by his numerous followers, who asked for the address of its creator, and brought her, by their patronage, into marked notice.

After a few months in the Eternal City, the knowledge came to her with no less surprise than conviction that her bare painting-room in an obscure street, reached only by many steps, was considered an important one even among those of the multitudes who wrought most worthily and with many touches of genius.

That she was the pupil of one whose fame had pre-

ceded him gave her prestige; a prestige which her own work made lasting, and orders flowed in upon her.

Unflagging enthusiasm and unabated industry were not without their financial reward.

The young artist was happy with a great thrilling happiness. The spell of the place was upon her. The atmosphere, so heavily charged with the spirit of genius, weighted with the air of inspiration and achievement, permeated soul and body. All time passed before coming to this land of enthusiasms and visions became unreal to her. Her real life was here, identified with the dust and desolation, the throbbing dulness of these monuments and miracles which gigantic minds and skilful hands of the past had conceived and executed, and from which time was powerless to wrest their dignity.

She was a slave to her environment, and wore her fetters gladly.

The pupil for whom her instructor had feared the distraction of love and lovers was entirely absorbed in her work, utterly busy about one thing, wrapped in the ecstasy of creation, weighted down with dreams which her inspired fingers were ever trying to shape into realities.

The first gleam of day and the last afternoon ray were utilized.

She seemed like one with a charmed life. She took no rest, and seemed to need none.

All seasons found her in Rome, and the coldness of the winter, and the pestilence which in summer rises as

the people's scourge from the miasma-haunted portion of the city, were not suffered from, or even realized.

From her studio opened two humble living rooms wherein her scarcely-thought-of food was prepared, her scanty repose taken.

Vancourt was also mad with visions, intoxicated with art, absorbed in creation.

Wholly absorbed? He wished and meant to be so; commanded himself to be so—and knew that he was not. He shuddered as he realized his loneliness and dissatisfaction in the midst of work which he had vowed should ever be to him as parents, friends, home, and which before a summer wherein there came up daily from the borders of the sea one clad in soft raiment, and bearing with her the unconscious sorcery which had overcome him, had served him as these things serve other men. Within him the battle still raged.

But he had regained his power to paint; indeed, had gained a new and stronger power than had before been his, which showed itself in sterner lines and fresher conceptions.

In those days nothing with a hint of softness in its composition or execution grew under his brush. Beneath his carefully fierce strokes there appeared on the large canvases which he used, seeming to crave space for bold, long dashes, pictures of the stern, smitten places of earth; storm-stricken, wreck-strewn shores, seen in fading winter twilights, with strips of angry sunset clouds stretching low in the west; mountains rising with bold abruptness thousands of feet into the

misty coldness of the air, lightning-blighted and shivering pines, their half-uncovered roots showing brown against the browner soil, clinging to their sides; caverns with fierce darkness meeting the eyes at their mouths, and heavy surges breaking at their entrance-ways—pictures full of the dread and terrible in nature, which fascinated beholders with their stern sadness, their mighty desolation.

Vancourt might have been the most fêted man in Rome. Multitudes flocked to see his paintings, which were sold before they were finished. He was talked of in every place where Art was mentioned; written of in the papers of all lands. Invitations flowed in upon him, and he was deluged with the letters of those who would do him favors. But he cared nothing for these things. He never listened to the talk, never read the papers, though they were sent to him by the score, heavily marked. Never accepted the invitations and favors, never discussed himself or his work. The discouraged worshippers of his genius had no close knowledge of or acquaintance with their silent hero, and became aware that the passion for Art which rendered him one to be desired also denied him to them.

He gave but little personal supervision to the work of Miss Trescott, whose studio was a half mile from his own. She had proved herself the intuitive painter, possessing that which is embodied in no rule, taught by no school. An occasional terse word of advice or bit of correction or approval was all that she received or needed from him.

To her, also, invitations were given, and favors

proffered, to be set more gently but not less decidedly aside than were the overtures made to her instructor.

It came to be averred that the two painters, who might have claimed companionship with those of highest social position, owned but one friend, a pale-faced, somberly garbed man with intellectual forehead, gleaming eyes and silent tongue, who occasionally entered their studios without preamble, apparently welcome, and sat watching them at their work.

The gay and careless students, meeting for midnight carousals over bottles of cheap wine, spoke in the pauses of their songs and laughter, half in reverence half in derision of the newcomers.

"Pouf!" cried one whose occasional work brought forth wonderful shapes, but to whose Bohemian soul close application was as irksome as the national vintage was welcome to his palate, "there are no bubbles on their beakers, no shimmer to their wine. Leave them to their plodding, and drink to gay lives and the morrows which take care of themselves."

The sentiment would be applauded, the glasses drained, the laughter and songs renewed, but some of the revellers, going to their poor quarters when the wine had been wasted and the merriment had died, remembered the high dreams of their earlier days and nobler lives, and thinking of the two painters at whose consecration they had jested, realized the worth of that which had been the butt of their jibes, and knew that in the self-imposed limitations of the artists lay their strength.

XIX.

CROSSING THE BAR.

He had the poet's eyes,
Sing to him sleeping,
Sweet grace of low replies,
Why are we weeping?

—RENNELL RODD.

In the little black house on the island, with the sound of the sea coming in at its doors, Pierre Devereux was dying.

The disease which had for years disabled his lower limbs had at last crept near to the heart, and his physician had declared that only a few weeks would elapse before death would come.

The brain of the musician seemed to have lost something of its comprehension of present things, for he sometimes spoke as though before audiences, and uttered thanks and words of appreciation for fancied favors.

He talked of Paris and Vienna, of Rome and of Naples, and often seemed to be living over the triumphs of the past.

During these last earthly days Carloné was his companion.

A fortnight had elapsed after the verdict of the phy-

sician before the sick man would consent to have his nephew informed of the nature of that verdict. He longed for a touch of the lad's hand, wearied for his presence, but denied his heart, said no to his longings. When the letter of communication was finally written, it begged the young man not to leave his work. "Assure him that I am well cared for and want for nothing," said the dictator to the old woman who ever since Victor's departure, had attended to his physical wants, and who now, with much laborious pains-taking, and in characters crabbed and stiff, was penning the letter which her employer had tried in vain to write. "I would not tell him of my illness at all, only he would perhaps blame me afterwards. But urge him not to come. Absence from his work would mean disaster now."

But within two hours from the time the letter was placed in his hands Victor Devereux had withdrawn his contracts, packed his portmanteau, paid brief visits to the two artists and Father Alpheus, and was waiting for the sailing of the steamer for New York.

In the face of the tidings he had received he was not Carloné; not the new musical wonder before whom Rome and the strangers within her gates had prostrated themselves; not the prince of the violin whose first strains had entranced the multitude which numbered among its hosts those with the most sensitively trained musical perceptions, the most finely poised judgment; not the artist who in a month had thrown the witcheries of his genius over princes and people alike, and to hear whom gold was poured out with

eager effusiveness, at whose feet in a nightly rain of beauty and fragrance, flowers fell as the petals of apple-blossoms fall in May time.

It was not Carloné, the adored, who sat waiting for the outgoing steamer, but the lad, Victor, whose baby fingers had first been trained in their infant strivings to evoke sweet sounds by the man who was dying amid the stillness and desolation of the New England coast.

The boy was strangely calm, curiously unelated, over his sudden and overwhelming triumphs. He was not unappreciative or ungrateful, but his thankfulness was a deep, hushed thing which was marvelled at as indifference.

The greatest, gladdest thought of his heart he could not breathe to another. He had not disappointed *her*. She had, by his arrangement, and with Vancourt as escort, sat in the audience whenever he had played in Rome, and the honeyed praise of press and dozens of daily private letters lay unnoticed while he read again and again the notes of congratulation and approbation of her who had set the seal of success upon him before his going forth.

He saw little of her. The work of each overfilled the time. But she was near, was happy, and he had won her praise. He was content.

For the rest, he took the matter of his stormy acceptance and the world's tempestuous approval calmly, and gauged them at their proper worth. He realized that if by the falling of a weight his hand should be wounded, if by any untoward accident his brain should become unresponsive, that those who now fawned upon

him would shower their favors upon a new favorite, and forget him as utterly as they had forgotten the man who was dying on that far-away island. But the dying man had been to him father, mother, instructor, through all the years which otherwise would have held for him none of these things, and would have loved him as tenderly, cared for him as carefully, had no talent been vouchsafed him, no sweet sounds written in his heart.

It was in vain that the manager urged, expostulated, and threatened; in vain that he offered to double the already large sum which Carloné was to receive for his next performance.

"I am exceedingly sorry," was the thrice-repeated reply to all the man's words. "No consideration for myself would induce me to cancel my engagement, but for my uncle I must do so. He is all I have in the world, and but for me he is alone; and he is dying. Pray say no more. I must go."

That night he sailed for America.

The physician was at fault in his estimate of the time in which the disease would bring death. Week after week it lingered in its progress, reaching no vital spot, and Pierre Devereux, bravely and patiently waiting for the touch which he knew must slay, begged his nephew to return to Rome, and was half glad, half sorry, and wholly grateful when the lad met all entreaties with a steady and loving refusal.

The summer waned, and still death held aloof. Still the musician talked of other days and other lands, forgetting his present in remembering his past. The

lad who listened so patiently and replied so tenderly, lived through the hushed days also in a dream; a dream of a summer one year dead whose sweetness had changed a barren world into a paradise of glowing sensations and burning hopes.

In the old time uncle and nephew had spoken but little of the Devereux family, but during the days when they waited for the death which came so tardily, the older musician, in hours when his mind was clear and rational, put strongly before the younger man the fact that if he chose to resign all thoughts of music as a profession, and to let his relatives know of his existence, he could undoubtedly claim heirship with the great house.

But to the boy, as to the man, the violin was cared for like a sentient thing, which to have lain aside as the mere plaything of idle hours would have been sacrilege and dishonor. To both the musicians the silencing of the strains which swept away the hardness of men's hearts and the sickness of their souls, which built for both player and listener a new world whose fabric was all glorious, whose furnishings were all divine, that a hereditary power might be preserved, seemed not wisdom, but a sacrifice too great to be accepted. The only power craved by these two, who would have been branded by utilitarians as little less than maniacs, and scorned by the worldly wise as simpletons, was the power to make men mad with sounds; the only rule they coveted to rule men's hearts by the strains they evoked.

"From you I have inherited my kingdom," declared

the lad in answer to his uncle's words, "and into my hands you have put the key. I shall seek no other."

The sick man, who had spoken of the things which might be merely for the sake of being quite just, rejoiced in the answer.

During those conversations Victor learned more of his mother's family than he had ever before known. He was reminded that after his uncle's death he would be its only living male heir, for the proud race had fallen in war and by disease till only one of the five, one of whom had been the father and four the uncles of the older musician, remained.

The Italian wife of that remaining one had bequeathed to her son her gentleness of heart and manner.

Two of the brothers had remained childless, one had lost his two sons in battle, and the only child of the other was a girl, who had early married a Russian prince.

The Devereux family was not the wearer of coronets, but one to which the wearers of crowns had ever paid homage, and which had ever been too proud of its name to allow it to be obscured under any of the many titles which had been offered it. For ages its men had been headstrong, honorable, valiant in war and wise in peace, intolerant to all whom they considered their inferiors, often disagreeable even to equals, sometimes cruel, always harsh. Its women had, for the most part, been such as men of this order choose; graceful, pliant, agreeable, fond.

The mother of Pierre Devereux and the grand-

mother of Victor was the daughter of an Italian count. Her great passion had been a love of music; a passion which in the months before her son's birth secretly indulged itself in hours of consecutive performance on an old, dark violin—worth untold gold—on which she afterward taught her child to play, and which, on her death bed, she gave to the boy of ten.

In his wanderings this violin always remained with her son, and by him it was bequeathed to Victor. In its side, set in tiny diamonds, were the two initials of the Italian girl's name.

Victor had seen the Devereux chateau. One day when Paris had seemed like a cage that shut him in, and his whole being had been sick for country sounds and the sight of growing things, he had boarded a train bound he knew not whither, save that it was out of Paris. Twenty miles away, at a place which pleased his eye, he left the car and walked for hours where greenness abounded and little brooks found their way through the sloping land. During this walk he had come in sight of a grand old mansion sitting in terraced grounds and surrounded by carefully kept lawns and gardens where noble trees had grown to great height. The gardener, of whom he had asked the name of the owner of the mansion, had informed him that it was the Devereux place, and in the garrulousness of age, had spoken at such length of the family and its affairs that the lad had been left in no doubt that he beheld the home of the brother and sister who for love of music and love of man had forsaken its grandeur. But even as he gazed upon the grand old

pile, and took note of the vast possessions of which the servant spoke, not for a moment did he wonder at the decision of his mother or his uncle. He loved and was music mad.

One evening when a heavy storm had cleared away late in the afternoon, leaving a sea which moaned with almost human sounds, Pierre Devereux awoke suddenly from a troubled sleep, and cried out in quick, imperious tones, "Boy, my violin. I am waited for."

Humoring this, as he had humored every fancy of this illness, Victor placed the instrument in the sick man's hands.

The invalid brought the violin to his shoulder, and into the room there floated a music as delicate as the sound of distant fountains, as ethereal as the sighing of winds among pines, as sad as the cry of the swan.

The lad hid his face in his hands, and great tears welled through his fingers.

Fainter and fainter grew the sound. In the midst of a strain of heavenly sweetness the fingers relaxed, the instrument slid from the nerveless grasp, and with a snap of one of its strings fell to the floor. The head of the musician sank back against the chair in which he had slept.

The sun went down amid clouds of stormy red; twilight came on cold and somber-colored; the waves moaned as though in grief for wrecks on other shores; the sea birds plunged and screamed.

Victor Devereux sat alone with his dead.

XX.

DECLINED FAVORS.

Of all artists, musicians are most exclusive in devotion to their own art.—MRS. JAMESON.

There was great rejoicing among the music lovers of Rome when it was known that Carloné had returned. The cause of his sudden leave-taking had been widely known through the news sheets, and managers and people turned their words of disappointment at his failure to appear at the appointed time into praises of his devotion to the uncle whose name many of the older frequenters of the music halls remembered.

On the evening of early September when the young violinist first appeared after his three months' absence, the house resounded with a storm of welcome, and when he had played his first selection flowers rained about his feet as snowflakes fall in a winter's storm.

Twice he had played. For the third time he stood among the blossoms, and drew his bow across the strings of the instrument which had, in the days of her dread of a great suffering and her hope of a great joy, beguiled the hours of an Italian girl who had found life in the somber house a stern contrast to the pliant existence among people of soft Southern lands;

the instrument on which she had taught her boy to play, in whose case the diamond initials were set.

Carlone was very pale and handsome as he stood among the blossoms, careful not to crush one petal by a careless movement of his foot. The people whispered to each other that his long vigil in the sick room had taken hold upon him, but had made him more interesting looking than ever.

Rising, falling, quivering, the strains succeeded each other, until, in the midst of a composition which had never been written save on the heart of the player, and which was pouring itself out for one listener alone, the fingers on the strings relaxed their hold, and the instrument fell noiselessly on the heaped blossoms. Carlone swayed and staggered, and but for the pianist, who had paused and looked around when the violin halted, would have fallen, as his instrument had done, among the garlands at his feet.

There was an instant's dismayed hush, and then hurried remarks, incoherent explanations, startled ejaculations, no one heeding replies to his questions, but all rushing toward the stage.

Among those who stepped upon the platform was an old man, stern of face, with a military bearing, whose white hair was tossed back from a forehead which had been ploughed deep with frowns, and whose stiff, snowy moustaches failed to wholly conceal the straight-lined, set lips. That night was the first which had found this man in a place of entertainment for many years. He had come now only by the strong sollicita-

tion of his oldest and most prized friend, with whom he was passing a few days in Rome.

Of all things in a world where many things were distasteful to him he most genuinely hated music. It was only the declaration of his friend that, much as he wished to hear the new and celebrated violinist, if his guest refused to accompany him that he should remain at home, that had caused him to appear at this concert.

But his hatred could not keep the entire keenness of its edge as he listened to Carloné. Some of the harmony evoked by the pale-faced performer found its way to his heart, but even this partial power chafed him.

The love of music had caused such havoc of his plans, such wreck of his hopes! To-night its strains carried his thoughts back to his earliest wedded days when the dark-eyed girl who had become his wife had beguiled the hours by playing the violin. He had then become impatient of the music, which had seemed like a voice of longing for things left behind, and had harshly bidden the player to never let him see the instrument in her hands again. She had never done so, but he had sometimes caught the distant sound of the violin. He had held his peace, not wishing to seem unkind.

And then he thought with a great wave of bitter remembrance of the son in whom his heart had hoped to find its fondest dreams realized, by whom the proud family name was to be perpetuated, made stubborn and disobedient, a wanderer from his home and fair estates

by love of the music whose witcheries had permeated his nature ere he had entered the world of living men.

As he listened to the new star, he lifted his face to the place where Carloné stood, and his eyes fell on the instrument which was pressed against the shoulder of the musician. He started violently. There, set in the case of the violin, catching and flashing back every gleam of light, were the two diamond-formed initials of the girl whom he had wedded, never dreaming that her skill with the bow would do more for his disaster than the sabres of a thousand foes had ever wrought. Surely there could not be in the world two of those old, jewel-marked Stradivarius violins.

And then with the long, close look which he gave the musician through his glass another memory bitter to his pride arose.

The face of the player was so like another face; the face of the nameless, homeless, honorless man to whom the heart of his daughter had clung but the closer for her father's threats and entreaties, and to whose lover, when the girl's obstinacy in love had proved as obdurate as that of her brother in Art, the honored name of her sire had been given. Darker still grew the old, stern face as its owner remembered that this unknown intruder had proved too proud, even in his poverty and the position which had been thrust upon him as a favor, to bear repeated insults and reiterated taunts, and had borne away the daughter of the noble house to a foreign land.

"No one but his son could be so like this peace-destroyer and honor-desecrator," the old man muttered

fiercely, all his old hatred of the one who had defied him bursting into fresh life.

When the musician had fallen, and his agitated listener had, with others, stepped upon the platform, he had cast one penetrating glance at the prostrate form which was being lifted by several men, and then, speaking to one who by the authority he assumed proclaimed himself manager, he said :

“This young man’s name, give it to me. I have the best of reasons for asking it.”

The man glanced at his questioner, and realizing that in him he saw one who was in the habit of being obeyed, and being always anxious to please his public, replied :

“His name is Devereux ; Victor Devereux.”

When the half unconscious Carloné had been borne to a carriage, seeing the white-haired aristocrat still lingering near the stage, the concert-giver went to him, and added voluntarily :

“The young man is far from strong. He has just come from America, where he has been caring for an uncle, who, after a long illness, has recently died. This uncle was a great musician, also, though his nephew will outrival him ; indeed, does so already. Pierre Devereux played for the first time in Rome in this very hall.”

As the man spoke the head of his listener fell a little, and something of the sternness melted out of his face. He was silent for a moment, and then asked the name of the place to which the young musician had

been taken, thanked his informant, and walked away to find his host.

The gray of the morning had begun to steal in at his windows when the old man lay down for a short sleep; sleep which came slowly, and was but fitful at best.

It was ten o'clock when he sought the hotel where he had been told that Carloné could be found.

It was the hardest thing in life for this man to humble himself, and sue for a favor. His was the habit of command, not of supplication. But his mightiest love was love of race, his highest devotion devotion to the name and traditions of his ancestors. This musician alone bore the Devereux name. If the Devereux estates passed to his niece her sporting husband and spendthrift sons would barter its timber lands for the price which the lumber would bring, sell its lands for villa grounds, bring a horde of sportsmen to shoot in its precincts and fish in its streams, and turn the stately mansion into a banquet hall of feasting and frivolity.

This must be prevented at any cost.

Neither must one who was known as an artist reign over the Devereux estates. In such a case they would be neglected, the prestige and power of the old name be lost, and perhaps no sons bred to keep it in the memory of the world.

The last Devereux must come, and come as the landed gentleman, to inherit the Devereux name and possessions.

If this could not be, a stranger should be given the

name; the goodliest, bravest stranger that could be found, and with the name the estate should go.

But a mighty effort must be made to bring the real Devereux as master and possessor of the waiting heritage.

Though he had never passed a word with the young musician, he felt instinctively that the music-madness was in his brain, and that no thought of even such fair goods as would be proffered would turn him aside from his insane worship, more than the thought of the same bounty had changed the determination of the son of the house of Devereux in the years that were gone.

But there should be power in the urging, persistence in the refusal to accept denial.

"Ask M. Devereux if he will see one who knew his parents and his uncle," he said to the servant, and after a brief delay he was shown into the room where Carloné lay, the musician not being able to rise and receive him.

But little softness mingled with the feeling with which Pierre Devereux the elder looked upon his grandson. He was the child of a daughter who had disobeyed him, the offspring of a man whom he hated even yet, though he had known for many years that he slept beside the woman whose love he had stolen, in that far away land beyond the sea. No association had made the old and the young man dear to each other, and to such a temperament as the older man possessed any clinging affection was impossible.

But he realized the importance of his mission, and struggled to be exceedingly gracious to the pale-faced

violinist with his father's despised beauty of face, and the madness of his Italian ancestor in his brain.

When inquiries for the health of the musician, and condolences for his illness had been offered, Pierre Devereux spoke in terms of regret of the relations which had existed between himself and the son and daughter of his house, and then made known the real object of his visit. He urged upon his grandson the acceptance of the wealth and honor of his mother's people, provided he would forever relinquish the career of a musical artist. The necessities and hardships of a musician's life were held up in dubious contrast to the glory, power and pleasure which would come to the possessor of the Devereux properties.

The lad listened patiently, his hand resting on the old dark Stradivarius which lay on the counterpane, and to which his fingers had stolen when the old man had begun to urge his request.

It was not of lands and gold and worldly prestige which would come with the acceptance of this proffered heritage that he thought, but of his precious kingdom of harmonies, beside which the gifts now held out to him in exchange seemed pale, poor things. The bribe was a magnificent one, but not for a moment did it tempt him.

"I thank you sincerely," he said gently. "Your offer is a generous one, and I doubt not that you mean it kindly, and for my best good. You cannot understand my feelings any more than you could those of your son, but I assure you that should I accede to your terms I

should feel that I had bartered my soul and sold my manhood. It can never be."

Bitter words arose to the lips of the man whose age was no gentler than his youth had been, but he forced them down, and again went over the ground, adding fresh arguments, urging new reasons, but the answer was in substance the same.

"I shall not regard your decision as final," the old man said as he arose to go. "I will give you a month, two months if necessary, in which to change your mind. You appear like a sensible young man, and there can be but one sensible conclusion in this matter. At that conclusion I expect you will arrive."

"Do not hope it. You will thus only provide yourself a fresh disappointment," was the musician's reply.

Pierre Devereux waved the words away with an imperious gesture of the hand, and with a few gracious expressions of farewell, took his departure.

When he had gone the lad gathered the violin into his arms and laid his face tenderly against the diamond letters in its case.

XXI.

THE ONLY WAY.

The man is proven by the hour.—TENNYSON.

“Can you think of no way in which he can be induced to yield?” said Miss Trescott to the priest. “It is sheer madness, actual suicide. I have talked with the physician, and he declares that recovery here is impossible. How can he be so stubborn when so much depends upon his going? Can it be that there is no way to change his decision?”

Carlone had been ill many weeks.

The long strain of waiting in that island-home, the grief and loneliness which his uncle's death had brought, added to the impairment wrought by those wearing days and sleepless nights in Paris, had rendered him an easy victim to the malaria which scourges Rome during the summer and early autumn. Fever had scorched him and chills had shaken him, with little respite between their attacks, till now, although a deadly weakness had replaced the fire and frost, and the physician pronounced him better, he was white and strengthless, sleeping from mere exhaustion, and taking but little food.

“You will never regain your strength here,” the doctor declared. “In a week's time you will be able to

travel by slow stages. Go to Vienna and Naples. Wander about the vineyard districts of France. Boat and fish, and gather the vintage with the peasants. To remain here is sure disaster."

But the lad shook his head, and thought not of leisure but of work.

He was almost penniless. The money which he had earned had gone, for the most part, to those who had assisted him during his student days at Paris. The small sum which he had reserved for his own needs, together with the slender amount which had come to him after the death of his uncle, had been nearly all exhausted by the passage to and from America.

In vain had Helen Trescott pleaded, and Vancourt urged his wish to be of service to him. To accept the loan of money from any source was a torture to him, and especially distasteful was the idea of seeming to the woman in whose eyes he could least afford to be lowered, as one for whom charity was needed. To all prayers he was unresponsive, replying to Vancourt's offer of aid that he already owed him more than he might ever be able to pay, and would by no means add to that indebtedness.

In one way those days of pain and languor were the happiest of his life. Leaving canvases and brushes, customers and callers, Miss Trescott spent hours beside his bed, touching with cool, light hands his throbbing temples, raising his head in her gently-deft way while he drank of the mixtures prepared by her skill, reading to him in full, clear tones, giving herself in a hundred ways to her service for him.

He urged her to forego her ministrations, since they consumed so much time, but was, nevertheless, pleased when she refused.

As she sat day after day beside his couch, or went about preparing numberless things for his comfort, never doing the commonest or homliest things in a manner common or homely; keeping through all her nearness and tenderness her air of apartness, a new thought was born in his mind, a thought so differently arrived at, and for a reason so different, yet like unto that of the priest and the artist—that she should never marry. She should be loved like Laura and Beatrice, with no defilement as the result of love, no common consequences to follow in the wake of adoration. Her own beauty had grown with the beauty of her ideals, her own grace received addition from the grace which was fashioned in her brain and drawn by her pencil; she had been ennobled by dwelling on noble themes. The musician had dreamed that one day, should the laurel leaves thickly crown him, he would lay all that he was or could hope to be, before her, and ask her to bear his name. But in those days when the sense of her grace and her distinction came so vividly to him, she appeared to him as one for whom the ordinary ways of women would be in nowise fitting. Millions of matrons might sit beside millions of hearths, keeping alive the customs, fostering the traditions of their sex, making household happiness, guarding family honor. A goodly life, a needed life. But when one planet had swung itself away from common stars should an attempt be

made to lure into the path of routine, to turn its luster into common shining? The usual orbit was not hers. He felt that to her the usual love of man, manifested in the usual way, asking and receiving the usual rights of marriage, would be desecration. He wondered why Pygmalion prayed his statue into life; why its pure spotlessness, its undefiled grace, had not possessed for him a sacredness which was its dearest charm. Those who would handle life's distaffs and manipulate its domesticities were legion, but the queens of life, crowned by their own power, were too few to be counted in the ranks, or considered among the multitudes.

He remembered how once when wandering in the forest he had come upon an open space where a multitude of wind-tossed flowers, violets and harebells and other blossoms, had sprung up amid the moss which carpeted the ground. On the border of the plot, somewhat removed from her simple sisters, grew a tall, graceful lily, with petals of shining white and stamen of gold. Some children, on a woodland excursion, had come to the spot, and stopping with exclamations of delight, had filled their hands with the simple flowers. When one had reached to pluck the lily, the lad, with an instinctive feeling that this royal blossom should not meet the fate of common flowers, had put the boy firmly but not ungently away, bidding him leave the blossom ungathered.

The same feeling which had been his about the lily had come to him about the young artist. No hands

should gather such as she from their places, and try to group them with humanity's earth-flowers.

Never did Dante worship the object of his veneration with a finer-fibered, higher-keyed adoration than this poet-musician gave to the girl-painter. The thought of seeking her hand in marriage was put aside as an unfitting thing, and in its place came the resolve that through all the ages when chivalry flourished and love's foremost task was to serve its object, did knight honor his lady with more tender and constant devotion than he would serve his friend and cousin.

The thought of accepting his grandfather's terms never once occurred to him, even while the pieces of money in his purse grew so few and want glared him in the face. He had uttered the exact truth when he had declared that should he receive the proffered heritage he should feel that he had bartered his soul and sold his manhood. "All that a man hath will he give for his soul." The words came to him with new interpretation and meaning.

Far away in his stately desolation an old man waited day after day for the sign of yielding which was never given, the acceptance which never came.

"Can you think of no way in which he can be induced to yield?" asked Miss Trescott in her studio, where the westering sun was throwing shadows among the disorderly orderliness.

The thin fingers of the priest clasped each other in a tense grasp, and his face grew paler.

He knew of one way in which Victor Devereux might perhaps be induced to accept the aid which

would succor him ; one way only—and the thought of that way was bitterer than death to his soul.

Though a man might refuse to benefit by the gifts of another, if he were to become convinced that this other offered only that which by all rights, human and divine, was really his, he must be more than mortal if he persisted in his refusal.

And that the musician might be convinced that all that was offered him was morally his, he must be told the secret guarded so jealously through all the years, made aware of the shame which, according to the creed of the multitudes, was hers to whom he now paid such homage and respect.

And she must know of her parentage before it was revealed to Carloné. Could he tell her story to another while it was withheld from her, or without her consent and approval?

Ah, no, a double cross if any, the contempt of those two if of either.

And when the secret was known how it might spread. The world would say that always had he been the sensualist at heart, always the libertine in feeling, and that at last, under the cloak of newly generated ideas, under cover of convictions freshly born, he had thrust away the restraint of the Church, and gone out into the world whose vices he had always loved, whose pleasures he had ever coveted.

This thought was torture, but there were others which touched him far more deeply and painfully still.

During those months when she had come daily into his vicinity, often into his presence, and in these latter

days when she had shown herself so much the tender woman, the thoughtful friend, he had learned to love his daughter as men love the children who have played on their hearths and grown to maturity beneath their roofs. To be with her, trusted and valued for her mother's sake and his own, to show her the small kindnesses which were in his power; to receive from her the attentions which it was possible for her to bestow—all this was exceedingly sweet to the man who for years had starved for love, famished for tenderness. Bitter would it be to be shut out from her presence, to see in her eyes no look of gladness at his coming, to hear in her voice no tone of welcome; to know that she despised him, and would forever turn from him.

But all that he must suffer by the revelation faded into nothingness in the agony of realizing what it must bring her. There was ever with him a passionate wish to atone to her for all her mother had suffered for his sake; to make up to her for that hour of passion which was to change so many lives.

To serve her even to the giving of his life would have been to him sweet. Instead he must destroy her happiness, banish her peace, crush her pride. That a life might be saved and healed another life must be bowed, and smitten, and shamed. In order that the death which stops the breath might be kept at bay worse than death must be meted out to one who deserved only fair things. For him it was justice, bare justice, but to be obliged to torment her was the hundred-fold reaping of his sowing of sin. But the bitter cup must be drained. Did nothing else compel

it that hidden letter served as a command which he could not disobey.

"If it should ever come to your knowledge that wife or child of Archie Trescott lives, you will, I know, help Helen to do that which is just. By moral right the bulk of the Trescott property belonged to this discarded son, and now belongs to his possible wife or offspring. Let us meet in the Hereafter knowing that no one was robbed by us or ours of anything that was morally his. No matter what the cost may be, I insist that Robert Trescott's last wish be met, if possible."

The hour in which the artist put her anxious question was not the first in which the possibility of doing that which now seemed a necessity had occupied the mind of the priest. He had been over the matter again and again, but while the talent of the musician was bringing him all needed things, the telling of the tale had seemed uncalled-for cruelty. No serious consequences could come of Victor's refusal to share his cousin's bounty. There was no sufficient reason for shaming and humiliating an innocent soul.

But now a life was at stake, genius in danger; genius which had already proved itself marvelous. And there remained one way to save that life, to preserve that genius to the world; a way of thorns, a path of torment—but the only one.

The sun sunk lower and lower. Beside him, her hand on an easel, her white gown falling in graceful folds about her, stood Miss Trescott, asking with all her heart in her voice, a question whose answer must be a revelation which would change her whole life.

Through the priest's nature there had always run a strand of nobility; nobility that rejoiced that if suffering must come, that on him, rather than on another, it might fall. Now his anguished cry was, "If I could but guard *her*! If I could suffer it all!"

She must be told, and the hour was ripe for the telling.

"Come and sit by me, my child," he said, the words scarcely distinguishable in his parched throat, great beads of perspiration standing on his forehead.

This studio was his Calvary, the coming confession his crucifixion.

Miss Trescott, wondering if he were ill, moved to do his bidding, but ere she reached his side there was a low knock at the door, which was half-timidly opened, and a child's voice, with a ring of gladness and relief in it, said:

"I have found you at last. The grandfather bade me wait till to-morrow, but I entreated so hard he let me go to Mr. Vancourt's studio and learn where you were. Mr. Vancourt said that I would perhaps find you here."

As she spoke slender, lithe hands were removing the wrappings from a zinc-lined box.

"I wanted to bring you a gift," she said. "I knew of nothing you would prize but these. Do they grow in Italy, Father Alpheus?"

The small, dark face was raised to the face of the priest, and in the child's fingers were clasped some strange-looking wild flowers.

A thrill shot through the frame of the recipient of

the blossoms as there floated around him, like a cloud of incense, the perfume which was to him the fragrance of power, a pledge of the constancy of the dead. His feeling of direful weakness disappeared. The perfume calmed him like a sedative, strengthened him like a tonic.

"You were most kind, my dear little friend," he said in his usual quiet, courteous manner, "and to-morrow I shall be very glad to see you. I will call on Herr Lessing then, if you will give me his address. I did not expect you till later. I must send you away now. It will soon be dusk. Good night. I shall see you during the forenoon."

The child went out, and the priest, no longer trembling but calm and resolute, turned to the artist.

"I have that which I must say to you," he said. "Will you sit by me, here?"

The studio clock had struck a late hour, and along the city streets had long burned the few lights with which Rome illuminates her highways, when Miss Trescott arose from her chair, having heard the story of her parentage and the priest's reason for telling it after years of silence.

On her face there was a bewildered look, in her mind a straining endeavor to adjust her thoughts to new conditions. As the knowledge of her mother's danger had seemed old in the moment in which she received it, so these new facts seemed always to have been in her possession. Surely it was not merely three hours ago that she had regarded herself as Robert Trescott's daughter, a woman legitimately born. She

must have known for years that nothing she had thought hers could be honestly claimed.

Nothing? Ah, yes, one thing; her Art. In the chaos of her mind one thought was clear, one fact unaltered.

She went to the priest, who was standing with pale, averted face and somber eyes.

"Please go now," she said, "but come again in the morning. I must be alone to think it all out. Everything is so unreal to me; everything but one. The artist, with or without a name, is still the woman that remains."

XXII.

NAMELESS.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords
with might;

Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in music out
of sight. —TENNYSON.

“Miss Trescott, can one give away his name?” asked Flotsam, sitting on the studio floor Turk fashion, his fair hair glistening in the pale sunshine which touched it.

“One can share his name with another by marriage, or by adoption, or by legally bestowing it upon him,” replied the artist, carefully mixing colors on her palette.

She was never surprised at any question the child asked or any remark which he might make.

Herr Lessing was traveling in Europe with his grandchildren, and had decided to winter in Rome. He had taken comfortable rooms, and had settled down to his books, his beer and his meerschaum as placidly as though there were no more to be seen in this famous city than there had been in the little Maine village, leaving his few friends—for the sake of whose companionship he had planned so long a stay in their vicinity—to show the children the things which he had brought them so far to see.

The German had always lived plainly, and where living was inexpensive, but entered to his account at several banks were divers sums of money, not over large, but sufficient to enable him to carry out his plans for his grandchildren, which were to educate them for the most part at home, and by travel in many lands to cause them to see men and things as they actually existed in different countries and under different circumstances.

Sightseeing was to him an undeniable bore, and it was a great relief that he could place his charges in the hands of those whose pleasure it was to chaperone them in the quest for the new-old objects and buildings of interest in this mighty metropolis of the past.

The children were not always with these friends when supposed to be so, and ran a little wild, but never came to any especial grief, or wandered into any especial danger. Each was true to the old love, Flotsam spending his spare time pretty equally with Vancourt, Miss Trescott and Victor Devereux, Jetsam remaining hours with the priest.

It was an autumn morning, with sadness in the pale beams of the sun, a hint of winter in the general barrenness of aspect and chilliness of air, when the boy sat in Miss Trescott's painting-room asking his question about the giving of a name. He was silent for a moment after receiving the artist's reply, then he said gravely:

"I think Victor—*we* needn't call him Carloné, need we?—means to give his name to some one, though I don't see why he should have to stop playing if he did,

do you? It would be terrible for him never to play any more. He thinks so, too, only he believes it is a good thing to do so, as long as he can't play and give her the name too. I don't understand it at all, but he didn't know I heard him talking, and so I didn't like to ask about it, and I slipped out just as easy, and went straight home."

Miss Trescott, whose face was pale, and who looked like one who had lost much sleep, turned quickly, brush in hand, and asked, almost sharply:

"Of what are you speaking? Can you tell me all about it?"

"Why, of course," answered the boy, his head uplifted, his beautiful eyes all alight.

The artist did not attempt to work, but with brush still gripped between her fingers, sat looking straight at the narrator as she listened.

"It was yesterday afternoon," said the lad, delighted to be at his favorite occupation of story telling with his admired friend for audience. "I had gone to Victor because Father Alpheus said that he wanted me to come, but after just at first he did not talk to me at all; and so I stole into the next room where I found a book with such strange pictures. I dreamed out stories for the men and women who were dressed so queerly. I could see Victor, but I was so still I suppose he thought I was gone. He was so pale he looked like a calla lily Phyllis used to have, and his eyes reminded me of the star that used to come out first at home, which got so much bigger and brighter than the others when it grew dark. Victor drew his violin

up to him, and put both arms around it, and held it close, *close*, just as the mother held Jetsam and me one day when she was ill, and the grandpa had cried, and she had said she could not stay with us much longer. And he laid his cheek against the instrument where those shining letters are, just as the mother laid her cheek against Jetsam's and mine, and the big tears rolled down and wet the violin and the pillow, just as the mother's wet Jetsam's face and mine. And he began to talk to the instrument in a kind of sobby, choky way, just as the mother did to us.

"Do you suppose, Miss Trescott, that there is a little spirit in the violin that makes it understand when folks talk to it? Perhaps there is, and that is what makes it sound so *alive*."

"And then?" said the artist, waving aside the question with a motion of her hand.

"And then," the boy went on, "how he talked, as though he meant it *ever and ever so much*, and it came way up from somewhere.

"And I cried, though very softly, for he didn't know I was there, you see, and I was afraid he would feel worse if he found it out, and I kept so still, for I couldn't get away without his seeing me."

"And he said?" asked the artist, waving away the explanation as she had waved away the question.

"He kept the violin close," continued the boy, "and he said as though he loved it very much:

"'You are dear, *dear* to me, and we have been so happy, but she is dearer, and she must be made happy, and safe from babbling tongues. She has no name,

and there is a grand old name that we can offer her if we will but part company. O believe that I shall not love you less when I put you aside to assume the title and the gifts that I may make hers.

“ ‘Sometimes on Sabbath afternoons while she has an hour in which to listen, and all the household is ahush, I shall draw you forth, and you shall speak again, but it shall be of a husband’s love and the things of home. If we accept a rich man’s gifts we must also accept his conditions. And the old man who would dower a Devereux loves you not, and wishes the soul-fire which you kindle to remain unlighted, the intoxication which you engender to be unwrought. You are now my companion; you shall then be my treasured guest.

“ ‘I have wished that she might never marry, but be numbered among the few who have stood apart and been worshipped as great; that all her force, all her power should go into her paintings, making them creations which must live forever. But with me she shall still be unhampered. I shall have no triumphs to bring her, naught but my grand old name, and such material comforts as I can command by parting company with you. But for the horror which I suppose women must feel at having no name, I should not dream that she would think of stooping to me.

“ ‘Ah, but she shall lose none of her regality. No common care shall come near her, no ordinary fret and jar touch her. And she must never know that we part, you and I, unwillingly. Nothing we do for her must be called a sacrifice or seem like one. She must

think that the desire for worldly possessions overcame us. Perhaps this thought will cause her to respect us less, but we must not think of that. Nothing is too much to endure if she be the gainer thereby. He who cannot give himself for love loves not in reality. You are dear, *dear*, but for her place, her peace, I can renounce even you.'

"And then," the boy-narrator went on, "he looked so solemn, and clasped his hands over the violin, and shut his eyes, just as the mother clasped her hands above Jetsam's head and mine, and closed her eyes, and he said some words to God very low just as she did, and just as earnest as though God was right there, standing beside the bed. Isn't it strange we can never *see* God, Miss Trescott?"

"And then?" asked the artist, again putting his question aside by a gesture, and keeping her voice steady by a mighty effort.

"Why, nothing then," replied the boy. "He just lay so still that he looked as though he were dead, and I crept away. But all night I lay awake thinking of him, and I thought perhaps you would know of some way that would prevent him from putting away his violin to give that woman a name. I don't at all see how he can do it in that way, do you? And is there any way to prevent it, do you think?"

The artist laid her brush aside.

"Yes," she said, "there is a sure way to prevent it, and it shall be used. I must go to Victor now. I shall not ask you to come with me, for I wish to see him alone. You were very right to come to me with this,

but speak of it to no one else. You understand, dear Flotsam?"

"Yes, and I promise to remember," said the boy soberly, as he drew his Oriental cap over his curls, and with a graceful bow left the room.

In that Roman studio a tragedy had been enacted while the pale sun was sinking, and the work and pleasure of the city were drawing to their close; a tragedy which was the outcome of another tragedy whose consequences had spread themselves over many years. All life's settings seemed shifted, all its bearings changed.

In the morning when the priest had come, as she had bidden him, Miss Trescott had said:

"Go to Victor Devereux. Tell him everything exactly as you have told me. Arrange about the money. Make him understand that it is rightly his, and that he must take it, and go away at once. I will talk with you more when I have thought—have realized."

The priest lifted his pitiful, yearning eyes to her face.

"Oh, that I could have borne it all," he cried, "that you need not have suffered! Ah, Mother of God!"—falling, in his emotion, into the familiar exclamation—"how long, how direful are the results of my folly! Was it too much to ask that I might bear it alone!"

The tender heart of the girl was touched, and speaking in words like unto another innocent soul to one who had erred, she said softly:

"I do not condemn you. Only I cannot think just yet. It is very sudden."

There was in her face a mortal weariness, a pitifully bewildered expression, and her voice had a strained, pathetic note.

The priest longed to take her in his arms and comfort her as another father might have comforted his child. Instead he turned away, gropingly descended the many stairs, and went forth into the chill air, having done a noble thing, and yet feeling like a criminal; having been true to his best self, but scourged by his conscience as one who has sinned in the deadliest way.

He staggered like a drunken man as he went to his room.

He did not ask that he might suffer less, but with intense and continuous concentration he held his child in God's thought, beseeching for her His comfort.

After an hour of prayer he opened the drawer which contained the letter that had bidden him do full justice to Archie Trescott or his possible wife or child. Instantly the air seemed palpitating with perfume. From the opened drawer there floated the odor which was to him the sign and seal of a strong and dear presence, lightening his heart like a divine anesthetic, and into his soul there poured great peace, profound thankfulness.

"Again!" he said, lifting grateful eyes as though to greet a welcome guest. "Beloved, you are always true. I thank you."

"Go to Victor Devereux. Tell him everything exactly as you have told me."

This was the new command laid upon him.

It was a sad, thoughtful, but not a weak or fearful

man who sat by the couch of the violinist and told his story; told it as the artist had bidden him, as it had been told to her. Told of the life of the young man who had taken upon himself, with the most sacred intention of keeping them, the rigid restrictions and severe vows of the priesthood; who had entered upon a career which forbids life's closest relations, ardent in the thought of devotion to a cause which he loved, but who, untempted and untried before the onslaughts of temptation, had underrated the strength of his nature in one direction when pitted against its longings in another. Of her whom he had met at the house of a friend, and to whom his soul had gone out in that instantaneous worship which is no more to be accounted for than is the action of the moon on the tides. Of the disastrously quick giving of love for love; of the striving of two who shunned danger and dishonor, after a safe and exalted friendship, friendship which, when the time of separation should come, would enable them to touch hands and part, and to turn happily and serenely to the occupations and pleasures of life, missing each other as ideal friends must, but being engrossed in things apart as ideal friends may.

They were honest in their intentions and beliefs. They dreamed without knowing themselves asleep. They baptized their regard at the font of idealism, and christened it Friendship, believing, indeed, that it had received the right name.

The priest spoke of these things, and then, with a thrill and shiver, told of the night when his friend had revealed her intention of going away for a protracted

absence, and the pent-up stream of passion had burst its bonds, and the true name of Friendship been found to be Love.

He told of that night of final parting, of his friend's decision regarding her own life and his; of his renunciation of all the honors he had hoped to win; of his friend's confession, of her marriage to Robert Trescott, and of the view which the young man had taken of the matter placed before him; of the request of the dying man concerning Archie Trescott, or those possibly belonging to him; of the promise of the mother and child; of the duty left in his own hands for fulfillment; of the confession of the evening before, by which his daughter had first learned of her real parentage, and of the demand of the artist that the true Trescott heir should know all as she knew it; of her entreaty that he would not lose an hour before receiving his own.

Perhaps never had unselfishness met unselfishness in a truer manner than in that Roman chamber, though neither the man whose soul was worn to utter sensitiveness by experience, nor the lad whose delicately fibered nature had been blunted so little by experience, ever thought that he was doing nobly. It was the unconsciousness of entire sincerity, the abandonment of utter devotion.

The priest spared himself in no particular; he shielded his child's mother at every point. For himself and his act he asked no leniency; for his daughter he spoke with all the eloquence engendered by a mighty craving for her happiness, the chivalrous consideration which does not condemn another's sin, the friendship

which does not withdraw itself from the victim of dishonor.

Victor lifted his glowing eyes, and said, as though astonished that the speaker did not know what was in his heart:

"You think it necessary to plead for her to *me*! What has her father's mistake to do with her? I should love her were she the daughter of an unmarried criminal; and you are her father, and my friend. It was cruel that she should be told this that I might be benefited. It hurts me. And yet I see that you could not do otherwise. Forget me, and think of her; always of her; how to make it all up to her, how to comfort her. Think of that, Father Alpheus, and never once of me."

To the lad his love had so long been a recognized thing that it never occurred to him that in speaking thus he was giving hitherto unguessed information to his listener.

"You talk of love, my son," said Father Alpheus. "Is it a love that desires marriage? Would you give your name to my nameless one?"

"Marriage is not for one of her genius," began the lad, but his speech halted before the word "nameless." A woman, and nameless! And he had read so much of the world's injustice to women. Should this thing become known—as it seemed all things were destined, sooner or later, to become known—would reason, justice and mercy form a divine trio to shield and acquit her? It was not to be hoped for.

But who would point a finger at the bearer of the

Devereux name, the mistress of the Devereux mansion? His manhood had demanded that he decline his grandfather's offered gifts. Did not manhood and love now unite in the demand that these gifts be accepted that they might become hers, that never she might be called nameless?

"Will you go now, and come again to-morrow?" he said to the priest. "Give her my love when you see her. My *love*, remember. I am tired; I shall sleep. Ask Flotsam to come to me this afternoon for awhile. I want no one else. I have much of which to think. I do not blame you, only for her sake I wish it were all different."

Father Alpheus had gone away. The boy was sent, to remain for awhile, but to be noticed scarcely at all, and to be unmissed and unthought-of when he slipped away and employed himself with the strange book.

XXIII.

LEOLIN.

To be nameless in worthy deeds, exceeds an infamous history.—SIR THOMAS BROWNE.

Honor and shame from no condition rise.—POPE.

The priest sat with pale face, and burning eyes. Carloné leaned not against the pillows which were piled behind him. Vancourt, with his twisted red beard in his hand, his lips tightly closed, the brown tint in his eyes, stood with his arm resting on the mantelpiece.

Seated near a little table on which her hand rested, clothed in her usual soft, straight robe, was Miss Trescott.

To Vancourt she had herself told her story; told it as the priest had told it to her, refusing to receive recognition or friendship under misunderstood conditions.

The listener had listened on imperturbably while the tale was being told, but had lost not a syllable of the story. His reception of the confession was characteristic.

“Have I inquired aught of your parentage?” he asked, laying aside his brush and facing her. “We make names; they do not make us. The priest? Why should I judge him? I know nothing, care to know

nothing of him, save that he is an agreeable companion with which to spend a half hour. It is my business to paint, not to shrive or condone men. I leave that to the parsons. It is the painter in whom I am interested."

When Miss Trescott had gone he had lighted his briarwood pipe, but had failed to keep the tobacco in its bowl alight, and had sat for hours with its stem in his hand, idle through all the working hours of the day.

He never alluded to the subject again, but by numerous intangible ways managed to make the girl-artist feel that with the tutor and critic was mixed much of the personal friend.

It was by chance that Vancourt and the priest had met in Victor Devereux's room. Each had come to learn of the invalid's condition, and to bring such gifts as would be received.

When Miss Trescott entered the room each of its occupants looked into her face and read by that sure intuition which love gives that the crisis in her life had led to some definite new decision in her mind.

She greeted them all in her gracious way, made the musician more comfortable with pillows, placed near him some fresh fruit and flowers, and then seated herself at the little stand.

"I am glad you are all here," she said. "I have that which I would say to you.

"When my—father—" the priest started, and a thrill went through him—"told me of that which you know, the world's opinions and prejudices seemed to fall

around me like a pall, and to benumb my brain. But I have since seen clearly, reasoned calmly.

"The world, if it hears my story, will call me illegitimate, and so I am if the absence of the marriage service of the Church renders me so, but since I have thought it all out I do not feel humiliated or degraded by my position.

"Two people, noble of heart and pure of purpose, caught in the whirlwind of irresistible desire committed a mistake; oh, a direful mistake! before which they shuddered, and repented, and for which they tried by relinquishing all that was dearest to them, to atone.

"The result of this mistake was a child; the child of two people, each of whom would have given his life for the other, each of whom desired no other save his partner in the tragedy which the world would have called a crime; each of whom would have spent his life in torture to have undone that which was done, and in the impossibility of this, met existence in the bravest and most unselfish way of which he or she could conceive.

"When I was in New York there worked by my side a young woman who learned painting as an accomplishment only, for she was rich.

"From a sister student I learned something of the parents of this girl, and of the life they lived.

"Her mother, a handsome woman of grand presence, the daughter of an old and aristocratic family which was reduced almost to penury, had married a man who gratified his passion with mistresses, and loved no one but himself, but who desired a beautiful and dignified chatelaine for the head of his house; who beneath the

polish which education and constant contact with society gives, was vulgar, lewd, cunning, tyrannical. The woman loathed him, but because of his great wealth and the position which such an alliance would give her in society, married him. All his habits disgusted her; her cold haughtiness and repulsion exasperated him. They lived beneath the same roof, and maintained the show and glitter of their joint establishment, but each was the enemy of the other. The wife lived her life among the material things for which she had bartered her womanhood; the husband consoled himself with his tipplings, his intrigues, and his schemes for further gain.

“The marriage promise had been solemnly pronounced before the priest of a church, and a benediction given to the pair. The union was spoken of as ‘a splendid match,’ ‘a most fitting marriage,’ ‘a grand alliance.’

“A daughter was the fruit of this wedlock. Let those who have thinking brains and pure hearts tell me if, when I was reasoning of this matter which has so lately been brought to my notice, and the remembrance of that New York marriage and the daughter which came of it were in my thoughts—let those of thinking brains and pure hearts tell me if I was wrong in deciding that the daughter born of this wedlock, and not I, was the illegitimate child. Was I at fault in believing that if shame had touched the conception of either, it was her conception rather than mine?

“Do not misunderstand me. I defend the birth of

no child out of wedlock. Did I not say that my parents made a direful mistake?

“But in what estimation shall we hold a society which raises its voice in condemnation and contempt when frenzied love forgets itself, and as a result of that passion which must ensure its own bitter retribution, brings forth a child, while it smiles upon and congratulates, and makes respected, the begetting of children who are the offsprings of those who loathe each other, who cannot conceive nobly, or reproduce purely! Who are the cleaner, my parents or those of that New York girl? You know my father. My mother’s life was entirely pure and unselfish, with the single exception of this yielding to temptation. And yet society would point the finger of reviling at these two, and speak of those others as examples for prudent sons and daughters to follow.

“I know you all; know your nobleness, your generosity, your difference from the world. You are all the friends I have, all I crave. Shall I cater to, and suffer under, the opinions of a world which thinks the thoughts and does the things and sanctions the acts of which I have spoken? Never! Your judgment and my own shall be my guide.

“There is no name which I can legally call my own, but as my teacher”—turning with a smile to Vancourt—“has wisely said, ‘We make names; they do not make us.’ As under man’s law I have no name, I will, under God’s law, and by God’s gift, earn one for myself. The name which I shall hereafter affix to my pictures is *Leolin*; the name bestowed by a poet on one who died

for love; the chosen name of one who will live for Art. As the sculptor chisels upon the hearts of generations the significance of his name, so will I dream out, paint out, live out, by consecration, by concentration, by the labor which is genius, by the constancy which is religion, by the persistence which is triumph, the significance of the word Leolin.

"I shall not be unhappy. My work is my life. I want, would accept, no other. I would not exchange my painting-room for the grandest mansion in the world.

"Those who have a right to know my story have heard it. Of this I am glad. There is no need that others should know that which touches them not. You"—turning to the priest—"have doubly convinced me of that which I before believed, that useless suffering is wrong. Society shall not smile over and garble our story, your story, my mother's, and mine.

"All is told that should be told. I have called you Father Alpheus. It is a title which may mean all that it has meant—and more. Let it mean for us more. So far as in me lies I will be a daughter to you.

"We need speak no more on this subject. To those of this dear circle I am the woman, the daughter, the friend; Helen Trescott. To the world I shall be the painter, Leolin."

She glided from the table to the sofa of the lad, and began to speak of some simple thing touching his comfort.

The priest trembled in every limb. As when one long manacled is released he cannot at once shake off the

feeling of his chains, so in that moment of deliverance from the terrible burden of years he could not feel himself free. He had dared all, expecting nothing but contempt, condemnation and banishment, and lo! the return was life to the heart, joy to the soul. He had sacrificed all, and thereby gained all, but the power of realization did not quickly assert itself.

He arose and stood looking out at the pale sunshine on the ruins and the roofs of Rome, half wondering when he should awake, for surely it was all a dream; one of the many dreams which had befallen him, and which had left him sadder than before he slept.

He must go forth, and walk afar in the pale, hazy distance, and see if he was indeed awake.

Without a word he glided from the room, noiselessly closing the door behind him.

Vancourt arose to go.

"I greet the artist under whatever name she paints," he said, holding out his hand, and with more warmth in his tone than was usually to be heard there.

Again he was proud and glad of the words and the decision of his pupil, and yet, as he walked along in the autumn paleness through which the priest had passed before him, there were sorely gripping at his heart the words:

"My work is my life. I want, would accept, no other. I would not exchange my painting-room for the grandest mansion in the world." He had fostered the feeling which generated those words, had assisted the mental process by which they were wrought. He would not have had them unsaid, and yet—and yet——

He was in the position of one who is constantly tortured by that which he most prizes. He had demanded for her the feelings and the purpose which she possessed, and yet the answer to this desire was ever daunting and haunting him.

He would have changed nothing, and yet his heart was never at rest with things as they were.

He entered his studio, and began, with long, fierce strokes to cover the large canvas on the easel.

Miss Trescott remained with the musician, planning for his tour, for when she had begged as a favor to herself that he would use money from the Trescott estate, assuring him in a way which left no doubt of her sincerity that unless he would consent to share the property with her she should never make use of another penny of it, he had yielded to her desires.

He was to leave Rome at once.

When the details of the journey had been discussed, and she was about to go, she took his hand, and said as her blue eyes met his dark ones :

“I know that which you would have done, have sacrificed, for me, that the world might never say I had no name. Flotsam had not gone, as you thought. He was within hearing, poring over a book. You know how he remembers, how faithfully he repeats. He told me all, for you spoke your thoughts aloud. He did not know of whom you spoke, but could there be any doubt in my mind? What form of thanks can meet an offering like this? Who that has such a friend in all its borders shall call the world desolate? Never dream that your sacrifice—for the real thing is ever in the

inception rather than in the doing—was in vain. He who can touch hands with even one whose nobleness is attested, whose unselfishness is assured beyond peradventure, whose friendship is a great rock into whose shadow he can always flee from the pretence and the hypocrisies of the world, is armed for the battle of life with the force of faith, panoplied by the triumph of trust, cradled by the repose of entire confidence.

“I shall live better, paint better, because of your willingness to put aside your life to make mine safer, richer. ‘Greater love hath no man than this.’ That cannot refer simply and always to the mere physical life. The giving of that would sometimes be so poor beside other givings. You would have given more. I shall not—how could I through all my life?—forget.”

The musician was alone. The pale sun no longer shone on the roofs and ruins. There was a somber light in the streets, and in the room deep twilight. But in the heart of the lad, usually so susceptible to all the changes of light, there was a gladness which no shadows could dim; gladness pathetic in its intensity, solemn in its thankfulness.

As a mother draws her child to her breast and kisses its brow, he softly drew his violin into his arms, and rested his lips on the gem-formed initials of the Italian maiden’s name.

He lifted the case to his shoulder, and the feelings of his soul went out into the empty room in strains which Europe would have poured out its gold in showers to have heard, and managers would have had resound

across the spaces of their theatres at the cost of unstinted compensation.

He played to his friend, to her high courage, to her unselfish honor, to her undoubted genius; played out his love for her, his belief in her, his thankfulness for her.

When the bow was put aside he again gathered the violin, as some recovered thing, closely into his arms, and with it resting on his breast, fell into a happy sleep.

XXIV.

FAIR FIELDS.

Easily ye may discern him, and beckon him forth from the throng;

Ye surely shall know him by this—he hath slept on the Mountain of Song.

—EDITH THOMAS.

Was he the spirit of Bernardo who with his silver lute held the Roman multitudes motionless and dumb as though death had touched them where they stood? Was he the reincarcerated Cimarosa, with the wealth of wild waters, of swinging boughs, of sighing winds; the might of the cataract and the rush of rivers, the ring of the shepherd's horn and the piping of the goat-herd's reed; the laughter of the vintage gatherers, the swaying sound of the threshing flail; the passionate trill of bird-voices, the music of summer days, the echoes of winter nights, caught and sent forth from the strings of his violin? In him did Apollo visit the earth to charm its denizens anew? Was Orpheus again among men? Did Pan live once more to make men mad with his melody?

The dwellers in those Italian lands to whom the history and the legends—the latter seeming to them as probable as the former—of their country had been handed down from mouth to mouth, asked these things

with that superstition which is half their charm, and with that belief in the supernatural and miraculous which affords them equal satisfaction and terror.

They believed in spirits and angels. Was it not in the power of these wonderful beings to walk the earth, and do whatsoever they would?

Those who were wise in the written lore and trained melody of music, and had for half a century listened to giants of the bow, declared him king of them all, and brought to him their incense, poured out to him their praise and their gold, and wondered not at all at the wonderings and ravings of the common people.

Everywhere on Italian soil he was heard.

He refused to be long held in one place, but wandered about, reviving the history, repeopling the cities, going over the romances, conjuring up the bygone scenes of this land of Virgil and Cicero, whose inspiration blossomed into song or rolled into stately phrases; of Raphael, snatching from the blue depths of sky and floating fleece of clouds the idea of his heavenly faced children; of the mighty Angelo, fashioning the likeness of rulers whose mandates he dared to disobey, painting out the sternness of his character in the frescoes of the Sistine Chapel, breaking his heart over the banishment of his one friend, Vittoria Colonna; of Romeo and Juliet, with their stolen wooing in the dusk of summer nights, and their tragic death; of Dante and the stately woman of his worship; of Desdemona and her passionate lord; of Lorenzo and Jessica beneath the mellow rays of the moon; of Titian, catching the magic of

his colors from the heavens; of Rembrandt grasping the glory of the shadows.

On the home island, with only the sea surges breaking the stillness, he had lain day after day on the forest mosses or the pebbles of the shore, reading of these people, who, now that he was amid the scenes of their achievements and their loves, became to him real personalities.

His uncle's neighbors, when they had thought of him at all, had supposed him to be tilling Pierre Devereux's little garden plot, fishing in the sea or the streams, or, what was more likely, strumming on his violin.

With that obtuseness by which the ignorant mind sets down as useless everything which it cannot comprehend, the people of the island and hamlet had voted with almost entire unanimity that the usual occupation of the sick man's nephew was such as produced vagabondism, and could lead to no substantial good.

But the lad had read on, played on, though sometimes the weeds had grown tall in the garden, and there had been for dinner only bread and vegetables when there might have been fish as well.

But Pierre Devereux had been content, and neither he nor the boy had thought of the missing fish.

But when across the waves there came, through printed reports, and sometimes by private letters, tales of Carloné's triumphs, stories of Carloné's popularity, and of his performances before rulers of states, and wearers of the world's costliest jewels and richest robes, the farmers, cutting the grass in company, would

stop for a moment the ringing swish of their scythes to say to each other that it "was strange how that lazy chap of Devereux's had turned out," and the women between the moulding of their great pats of butter, or in conclave over the teacups, would assure each other that though "they had never said much about it they had always thought that Victor Devereux—*they* wasn't going to bother with that new-fangled name of his—had something in him different from most boys, though goodness knew that farming was a thousand times better than tearing around the country making folks crazy with a violin, if people *didn't* make such a fuss about it."

Carlone was happy with that deep, spirit-born happiness which owns no thanks to material things.

His music, his love, and his dreams, so different from all that the world holds as the best gifts, were enough.

The people spoke of him as a youth pensive and somewhat sad. His laugh was seldom heard, and he was much alone, but there was a shining in his eyes, and about his mouth a soft curve, as though he smiled at felicitous fancies.

He was heard everywhere.

Before the doors of rustic homes, where on feast days, or when the hours of labor were past, young men and maidens danced together till the black locks were damp about their dark brows, the strains of his violin were as perfect as when they floated down to those whose favor was fame, whose commendation was wealth. The airs which he played to men and women working in the

fields, knowing that by them he could dispel, for a few moments at least, the dull look of those who have nothing in their lives but toil, were gems as radiantly beautiful as those which caused richly appareled women to weep, and brought myriads of costly blossoms tumbling to his feet. "He could not touch the strings badly," one maiden said, when, because they had looked pale and worn, he had played long for her and her mother in the fields.

It was the simple truth.

Venice, in whose water-ways and under whose palace casements were heard the serenades of Stradella, was the city in which he best loved to linger. Here he was feasted like a god, bowed down to like a monarch. These people, with the utter spontaneity and the quick enthusiasms of their emotional natures, set up his name in vivas of acclaim, caressed him with soft phrases and terms of endearment for which the English tongue has no equivalent, and made the days for him one long festa, the nights a continuous triumph.

In other cities it was the same.

He was grateful to the people, but he lived a life apart from all this gayety and adulation, and was best content when away from the towns, away up among the mountains, where the air was fresh and keen, or down near the shore of some lake where life was quiet and simple, where people went about the daily work which brought their daily bread, and left him to his dreams, or in the heart of some little hamlet where the fisher folk sailed out in boats, and mended their nets in the sun. Wherever was the least restraint, and the

sweetest sounds came to keep time to his musings, there he best loved to be.

It was five years since Leolin had given back to him his companion, the dark violin with the gem-formed initials in its case.

With it he had sailed to English shores, and London had given him its greeting and applause, which were deep if slow, sincere if somewhat grave, and other cities of the mighty isle had brought their garlands for his wearing.

He often played in Paris, but did not linger in the gay capital for any length of time. It had never been a place to suit his moods. Rome was the central city of his love. He often wandered from it, but to it his mind went back, and on it his thoughts rested as home. The queen of his realm was there. In one of its studios Leolin was painting her name on the minds of men, engraving it on the memories of the multitude.

The prophecy of a summer night, with the moonlight lying in a silver square on the deck of his tiny yacht, was fulfilled. He was the Cæsar of the musical sphere, the Alexander of the world of sounds.

He was strangely unspoiled by the world's homage and his triumphs. He was too modest of heart, too free of self-flattery, to be aware of the personal magnetism which was really his. "I am only the reed through which the music blows," he declared humbly. "It is not *I* for which the people care. It is the sounds which somehow get into my brain, and come out through the instrument. I am nothing."

He was lithe and strong, though slighter of form

and paler of face than in the old days. Contact with the world had given him a polished manner, and new glory and fresh hope lent assurance to his demeanor and conversation.

For the rest, he was the silent lad of the Maine coast, the dreamer of the New England forest, the unrhyming poet, touched by all color, thrilled by all sweet sounds, moved by every heroic deed and tale—true, serious, tender; a wanderer in a self-created world.

He was passionately grateful that life had been so kind to him while it tortured and disappointed so many. He longed to render an effective thank-offering, to give an equivalent. It was this feeling which generated his strong desire to charm the poor, to put something of color and brightness into the existence of the peasants, to call somewhat of rose and gold into the gray sky of those who could pay no money for the pleasure he gave them, add no praises where commendation meant gain.

In many poor homes where he made melody he left pieces of gold.

He hoped the time would come when he could do more; when he could offer gifts of real service, actual help.

It came sooner than he had dreamed, and in a form different from anything which had occurred to his imaginings.

XXV.

PITCHERS CRACKED AND RENEWED.

With what cracked pitchers go we to deep wells
In this world. —E. B. BROWNING.

Myself.....did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
About and about; but evermore
Came out by the same door where I went in.
—OMAR KHAYYAM.

“A mad fanatic!” cried the tireless money gatherers. Others called him, reverently, “the Breath of God.” The recluse priest had become the world’s evangelist. For him, as for Carloné, there had been five years of wandering, but unlike the musician, he sought no solitude but for prayer and meditation, lingered in no quiet places, though the green and blossoming things of earth were dear to him, and rest often sorely needed.

He sought people; people always and everywhere, that unto them he might proclaim the power which had burst his bands of death asunder, and made of his soul a living thing. His years were far spent, and the burdened ones of earth were so many; This was the thought which allowed him no pause.

In many lands his far-reaching, magnetic voice rang

within the walls of cities and through the open spaces of country towns and by-ways.

"To me has been given Life," he had said on that pale autumn day when he had gone forth from the forgiving presence of Leolin. He had wandered on till he stood in the Forum of Trajan. There, amid the stillness and the sternness of that forest of stone he had solemnly consecrated himself to the service of humanity.

Such money as was offered him he received, but made no terms, suggested no compensation, and begged his daughter to send him no remittances. He never wanted for anything.

"What say ye," he cried to the multitudes, "is the most valuable thing in life? If I seek the marts where men coin brains and souls into gold, and ask, What hope ye as the fruits of your endeavors? the answer will be, Happiness. If I pause where plodding industry gives its days to accumulation and grows bitter over slow increase, and inquire, What expect ye from your travail? the reply will be, Future happiness. If I ask the woman of fashion why she arrays herself in robes of richness, and spends her days in following after pleasure, I shall learn that the striven-for thing is happiness. If I inquire of the murderer, the gambler, the swindler, the keepers of infamous houses—all who seek by schemes, or labor, or fraud, to add to their possessions or to pander to their sensations, what is the desired object of their strivings, from each I shall receive the reply: Happiness.

"And in his desire each will be wise; for happiness is

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the most powerful, the most vitalizing, the most energizing, the most ennobling thing in life. It is holiness, wholeness, satisfaction.

“Unhappiness is the father of destruction, its results firebrands which bring devastation into the affairs of men. Depravity may slay by thousands; unhappiness slays by tens of thousands. For every sin actuated by depravity a million are perpetrated because of unhappiness.

“Woo happiness. Seek it as the pearl of great price. It is your birthright. Without it you are destitute of your most precious inheritance. It is the kingdom of heaven unto which all things shall be added.

“Believe not him who declares that it is not necessary for man to be happy. Happiness is a necessity to wholeness, holiness. Unhappiness is itself a sin.

“But what is happiness? Is it given by the success of the speculator, the delved-for gains of trade, the nerve-bought spoils of the gambler, the hysterical hunt of fashion's slave?

“It is freedom from the tyranny of these things. It is a serene, high thing, untroubled by gusts of pain, or passion, or pleasure, or lusts or disappointments. It is God's strength, God's power, God's calmness. It is no mere mystical dogma, but a thing as tangible as electricity, as forceful and efficient as the law of gravity. *It is directed vibration between God's spirit and the spirit of man.*

“It is born of the king-brain, which is the center of your being. It is not believing something *about* God,

but *knowing* God; not the acceptance of a creed, but the realization of a spirit within.

“Where is this happiness, which is God, to be found?

“Never in the noise; always in the silence. Go ye, therefore, each day into the silence for an hour, a half hour, such time as ye can make. Still the surging thought currents. Call your attention home, and *let your whole being be concentrated on your desire for God*. Do not reason about him. By the Spirit reason and intellect may be mightily quickened, but by their use alone the kindling of the divine fire is hindered. A man and a woman stood in a garden from which each gathered a rose. The man picking his flower to pieces, spent many minutes analyzing its parts, and, unmoved, put it aside. The woman held her rose to her face, took in long breaths of its fragrance, and, knowing nothing of its structure, was happy in its perfume and grace.

“Do not try to analyze God; draw Him close to you, and enjoy Him. The infant knows not a single fact about its mother. It does not realize that she is a woman, or what are her functions or capabilities; it just feels that she is all it needs, and cries out to her with all its heart. Let your hearts *feel*, and cry out to God.

“And learn ye the power of *right breathing*, which is breathing into holiness. Know ye that right breathing leads to right thinking, and thought, which is the instrument of the mind, rules the world. There is but a single root word for spirit and breath. ‘The Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.’ What forever and always creates a living soul save the *spirit* of God? Not foolishly do

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the Orientals give spiritual meaning to the act of respiration; not unwisely or without reason did the Greeks believe that the soul is cleansed by deep breathing as the body by bathing. Then learn ye to breathe not the quick breath of weakness or impotence or excitement or fear, but the deep, far-reaching breath of strength and power and calmness and courage.

“There are reasons for these things which I cannot pause to explain, but the effect is far more important than the reasons, as the effect of your breathing through your lungs is far more important than why you thus breathe. When one whose work it is to teach the science of these things comes among you, avail yourselves of his knowledge, if you will. But in the meantime *do the things*, persistently, regularly, unceasingly. Then will you begin to know what real happiness is, and in time, longer or shorter according to the intensity of your desires, or created vibrations, will you be given intuition, understanding, illumination, freedom from evil thoughts, guidance for future conduct, heavenly companionship, the joy and exhilaration of life abundant. Then shall things take their true places in the scale of values, and while the ‘all things’ may not, undoubtedly will not, be the things you once considered most important and to be desired, God will surely keep His word that all needed accessories shall be added to your kingdom of heaven. You will not know hunger or thirst or nakedness, but be fed and clothed as the sons of God. Every true pleasure will be more fully enjoyed, every friendship become more satisfying, every experience have a deeper meaning, and in

reality shall all things work together for your spiritual and physical good. You shall go from strength to strength, from purity to purity, from might to might, until you 'awake in His likeness,' and 'are satisfied.'

"I have said with truth that happiness is holiness. Turn your faces to the reverse side of the divine shield, and know that holiness is happiness."

"A mad fanatic!" cried the tireless money gatherers. Others called him, reverently, "the Breath of God."

XXVI.

PICTURES AND PAUSES.

The power depends on the depth of the artist's insight of that object he contemplates.—EMERSON.

The atmosphere
Breathes rest and comfort, and the many chambers
Seem full of welcomes. —LONGFELLOW.

“I have seen the Christ!”

The words of the watcher in pallid land repeated in an old Italian garden aflame with color, rioting in bloom.

“You have seen the Christ? What mean you? If you have indeed seen Him, what shape took He before your eyes?”

The heart of the priest leaps in his bosom, and the words, spoken in the ancient manner which in his days of solitude had become habitual to him, and which he has never lost, are eager and quick.

Has she at last seen, at last comprehended?

For years never a night had passed, however weary with traveling and teaching he may have been, but for an hour, two hours, three hours, sometimes when his duties had been comparatively light, till far into the morning, he had sat with all his faculties massed into

one chord of suggestion, to bring before the mental sight of another the sublime thing which he had once seen, and ever afterwards beheld.

“Will she *never* see!” had sometimes been his impassioned cry. If any glimpse of that glorious Face had come to her could she have remained silent? Would she never speak?

At last she had spoken.

She had seen the Christ; the Christ of pallid land.

Her reply, so awed, so enthusiastic, voicing a feeling, so like unto his own that the strongest words were impotent to describe this incarnation of Might and Radiance—by this reply he was assured that his long mental labor had not been in vain.

His desire to bequeath to her a heritage richer than gold, of more worth than jewels; to atone to her for the lack of a name by the bestowal of the most glorious mind-model ever possessed by mortal—this desire had reached a grand fulfillment.

With all his soul he thanked God.

She had at first found no name for this vision. Upon her mind, as upon the mind of the priest, had been impressed the image of a worn and lacerated Christ, the bearer of unlightened burdens, the victim of unpitied woes, the Saviour of a world which repaid salvation by crucifixion.

Not all at once had the perfect Vision come to her.

It was before her mind but faintly and in part for weeks and months, but growing always clearer in form, surer in color, as the growing sunrise splendor shapes itself in the east. Glory by glory, had it come to per-

fection. When day after day it appeared before her mental vision, and, as week followed week, disappeared not, she recognized in the Face, like in its mighty tenderness and unearthly beauty to no face among men, the countenance of the Lord, and at last said to the priest:

“I have seen the Christ.”

Vancourt, too, had seen the Christ, but nothing in his vision was like unto the picture in hers.

Stronger and stronger through the years had grown his painting. His shadings had become heavier, his strokes more tense and stern.

He had come to be spoken of as the Painter of Power.

He, too, had seen the Christ. Seen him not in glory, but in shame; not in triumph, but amid Calvary's blackness of darkness.

He had seen the Christ, but it was as the Incarnation of Sorrow, the Embodiment of Despair; the dead Christ alone on the cross at midnight, the wrack of inky, frowning clouds above him, the tragedy of a misunderstood life, of betrayal unto death, of the breaking heart and bloody sweat beneath the somber olives of Gethsemane, the mortal agony of tender, torn flesh and writhing nerves—with the utmost terribleness of these things within the Face, he had seen the Christ.

As unto the pupil had come, glory by glory, the vision of the conquering Lord, so, detail by detail, there had risen before the mind of the master the whole horrible tragedy of cunning cruelty and blind brutality, centered and symbolized in that figure over which the

thick darkness hovered in the Countenance whereon the passions of a nation's hate had written a record of the triumph which was to prove that nation's doom.

Master and pupil had seen the Christ.

Outside of the city, set in a wilderness of trees and vines, was a stately old mansion, half-ruined but wholly beautiful, which was pointed out as the home of the noted artist, Leolin, of whose history Rome was so ignorant.

To this house the priest sometimes came for brief visits, and wherever his wanderings might lead, the thought of this green-laureled retreat, and the woman who came down the rose-lined path to meet him, was home.

In another home, in another country, a grand chateau set in ample, spreading grounds, within whose domains many servants waited to be bidden to their tasks; on whose walls hung masterpieces of old painters; in whose vast banquet-room there gleamed on tables and glowed on sideboards massive vessels of silver, glass of costliest pattern and device—a house which stretched away into lofty saloons and galleries, each furnished with a dark, substantial dignity which only very light hearts and blithesome fancies could render less than oppressive—in this home Father Alpheus was also looked for with eagerness and welcomed with cordiality.

When from a penniless musician, a youth sick, and almost inevitably in need, there had come to Pierre Devereux the courteous but decided refusal of his offered estates and position, the wrath of the old man

was fierce and violent. He raved as he had done when a daughter had dared his anger for love, and a son had disobeyed him for music. In the bitterness of his disappointment and the fury of his anger he vowed with many an oath that no relative of those who had borne the Devereux name should inherit the Devereux property. None of those Russian cubs should come, with their wild ways and devastating waste, to glean advantages which they would never appreciate. He would adopt a son who would be different in every way from his own obstinate offspring, and the grandson whose tastes were a disgrace to a race of warriors and statesmen. He would waste no time before looking for a young man gallant and tractable, who could recognize the greatness of great men and things, who would be the companion of his old age and become his heir.

He found such a young man without an effort.

One day in conversation with Carloné Flotsam learned of the old chateau which had been the home of the musician's mother and uncle, and of the violinist's decision never to become its owner.

When wandering through France a fancy had seized the lad to visit this old place. On finding it he obtained permission to go over the house on pretext of wishing to examine its rare paintings, of which he had heard.

Its stern-faced, fierce-mannered master was himself the young man's guide.

Without a shade of insincerity or an unfelt exclamation the boy went into ecstasies over the house and its

treasures, and standing before the long row of Devereux portraits, made for each, as appropriate for its original, such wonderful and graceful stories of heroism and chivalry, that, although the imagined character often came far from fitting its subject, the face of the Devereux whose portrait hung last in the line relaxed, and he listened with pleased interest to the improvised tales of the stranger.

"You must feel so proud and honored to be one of them!" said the flute-like voice of the boy, while the lovely eyes, blue and wonderful as Italian skies, looked into the keen gray eyes of the chateau's lord.

"A delightful companion," thought the lonely old man, and detained his visitor long, and had him dine with him.

The lad was not surprised. Through all the eighteen years of his life he had been admired, caressed, listened to with interest by friend, acquaintance and stranger. His handsome person and strong magnetism had never failed to gain him admirers everywhere, while to those who knew him best he was most dear.

The master of Devereux Hall drew from him the story of his life, parentage and antecedents, and asked for an address where a letter would reach him.

A month later, at its master's request, Flotsam again visited Devereux Hall, and on this occasion was informed that after due thought and proper inquiry Pierre Devereux had decided to ask François Ernest Renault to take the Devereux name, and become heir to the Devereux estates.

Great was the young man's elation at this un-

dreamed-of proposition, but the offer was not accepted until he had sought Carloné and learned that the decision of the musician in regard to the estate was unchanged and unchangeable, and that it was his sincere desire that the lad should fill the place which he had declined.

And so when the apostle of happiness sometimes found his way through the grounds where many a proud man's foot had passed, and rang at the great, dark entrance, there came forward to welcome him the nineteen-year-old master—whose adopted father had lived only six months after the coming of the new heir—who, beautiful as the lilies of the field, was also like unto them in his unearned magnificence and his exemption from toil.

The youthful lord of the mansion was ever delighted at the coming of the priest, but there always stood by his side a dark-faced maiden with brooding eyes, whose joy, if less demonstrative, was more deep.

The boy-master had ever been the friend of Father Alpheus; the girl-mistress had been his companion.

Occasionally to the dim old place which he had refused to make his own, Carloné came, bringing with him his violin, and making divine melody in the rooms where the lonely Italian girl had drawn the bow across its strings, and where her son by his despised strains had brought upon himself the ire and condemnation of his father.

"I am glad the place is yours," the musician would say to the lad who ruled his stately household with as much ease and grace as though all his days had been

passed in lordly halls. "I love to come to it as your home; as my own it would oppress me terribly."

Once, when the beauty of spring was over everything, Leolin and Carloné had together visited the chateau.

The artist had moved through the long halls and spacious rooms, her straight white robes clinging about her, a gracious presence, crowned with her own nobleness, wearing her womanliness as an empress would wear her diadem; and the musician, walking by her side in a dream of silent joy, seeing in her something so different from other women, remembered the lily among common flowers, and thought, as he had thought so many times before, of Dante and Petrarca, understanding anew the worship which had enslaved them with noble captivity.

XXVII.

DAYS OF DISASTER.

There is rust upon locks and hinges,
And mold and blight on the walls,
And silence faints in the chambers,
And darkness waits in the halls.

—LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON.

Carloné was playing in Rome; playing every night to the strangest audience that ever set itself down to listen.

The usual number gathered was not a large one, though to hear this master hundreds came where a lesser musician could not have summoned scores. Carloné never lacked hearers, but the face of every listener was pale, and there was on every countenance an expression of alert anxiety. When the sound of swinging doors was heard, and a messenger entered to summon one of their number, each one held himself in readiness to be singled out for departure.

Rome was ravaged by fever, spent by pestilence. All over the land for weeks the heat had been intense and unbroken. The sun had seemed like a pitiless demon, and the wind come laden with death from the marshes miles away. In those portions of the city where cellars swarm with human beings the whole year round, the

miasma had lain hold of its victims by scores. As the heat increased, and fear added its power to disease, scores became hundreds, and not in the haunts of poverty alone, but among the comfortably housed, the cleanly middle classes, and all who for any reason remained in Rome, the fever spread itself with entire impartiality. Hundreds fled from the suffering city, but those left to become victims of disease and fear were numbered by thousands. The seamstress was seen at her narrow window one day, the next there was no one at the casement, and the dead cart stopped for a moment before the door of the poor house to add one more to its ghastly load. The pupil in the studio, whose slender earnings or nightly carousals had left him no means of flight, looked at others painting in a manner as mechanical as his own, and wondered if another day would find all the brushes moving, and on the morrow did not count those which were lain aside because his own was still. Sculptors dropped their clay or chisels, and went out from the company of their fellows with looks that said farewell. Laborers, taken from their usual tasks to toil through all the hours of the day at making graves, threw forth to-day the earth which covered them to-morrow.

The streets were silent but for the sound of conveyances for the sick and the dead. The few foot passengers, emaciated by disease and apprehension, pale with watching and dread, glided along as stealthily as though they were already ghosts.

Rome was under an iron rule, a hand of steel.

Death and Fear were her despots.

And every night Carloné was playing in this plague-stricken city.

From his wanderings in cool valleys, his floatings on pleasant waters, he had come to this place of torture and of terror to give all that was his to the succor of Rome.

The poor were so very poor! There was so little wherewith to obtain things needed for meeting this terrible crisis. To the few who remained in Rome, and who could spend money and time, an hour's music at evening was a welcome respite from the anxiety and dismal suggestions which were pressing upon them on every hand. It was announced on placards that all money taken for tickets would be devoted to the relief of the suffering, and many who could not linger to enter the hall paid for a seat, and went away to the dead or dying.

"Why does he not play in other places, and send his money here, since he is so anxious to be of aid?" was the question asked by many, and the true reply was that the musician wished to give himself as well as his gold. Money was sorely needed; help was needed more sorely still. The city had been deserted by nearly all who might have been of assistance. To linger was almost sure death, and few were brave enough to stay. While the authorities asked for money they begged for help.

And so from his wanderings of gain and of pleasure the musician came to sell his talent and give his time to Rome.

All his time, with the exception of that evening hour

with his violin and the few hours spent in taking the rest and food without which he must inevitably have succumbed, was given to the sick. The old mansion in its tangled garden of trees and its walks over which the roses leaned, was the scene of his ministrations. From foul dens swarming with human life, running over with filth, where no breath of unbreathed or untainted air could be obtained, the stricken ones were brought to the spaciousness and comfort of the home of Leolin, from which they were borne forth convalescent or for burial. The servants of the house had fled, and among the suffering and the dead the artist and the violinist moved alone.

In that part of the city where disease was doing its most devastating work, there labored day and night two men of whom it was whispered that they did the work of twenty and bore fatigue as mortals never did before.

They were very unlike, the one with tall figure and pale features, whose keen hazel eyes could grow very soft, and who laid his pitying touch on the burning brow of sufferers with deft, thin fingers; the other a giant in frame, with straggling, tawny hair and a tangle of red beard; a man whose grasp upon feeble hands somehow gave a feeling of protection and strength, and by its potency many times aroused those who were being slain by fear alone.

These four, the two in the home of Leolin, the two in the city's direful confusion of death and desolation, seemed to bear charmed lives. No burdens appalled them, no fears assailed them. Throwing themselves

down only for a few hours of the twenty-four, eating hastily, working each with the zest and zeal of ten, fainting not, failing never, they remained alert, efficient, undaunted.

It was the fifth week of the plague. The death-rate had materially lessened, and fewer whom the fever assailed were slain. The heat had abated, hope was displacing fear. The city began to set its affairs in order.

The studios of the two artists were not yet reopened, but their owners were only occasionally busy with their gruesome tasks.

Nightly Carloné played on, each night his audience growing larger. In former times people had gone almost mad at the strains he invoked, but during this time of trial it seemed to those who listened that the very gates of heaven must be ajar and sounds of angel-musicians floating down. He had instructed the men at the doors to allow the poor to fill all places left vacant by those whose money secured entrance, and when the news of this bidding had spread abroad there was left no standing-room in the hall, and around the doors great crowds congregated to listen to the faint notes of the wonderful violin. Ofttimes in the latter weeks, when the sick did not so constantly require his attention, after the hour's concert in the hall the musician would go out among the gathered company and play as long and as skilfully as he had played for those whose gold he had gained.

"A man with a violin?" had wondered a girl on New England waters, and in that city across the sea people looked in each other's faces with the same thought.

A man with a violin? A god rather, with an instrument touched and tuned by hands immortal.

It was evening.

He had come out among them after his usual hour inside, worn and pale, but playing as they had never heard even *him* play before. It was as though he read and voiced every emotion of their hearts. Pain for their dead was in his harmony, prayer for the lives for which they agonized in his strains. Hope breathed its consolation, resignation sent its low voice forth. Now sad as the song of summer night-birds, now soft as the lullaby beside baby couches, now piercingly sweet as the tones of the nightingale, now triumphant as the bugle's note, the wonderful improvisation went on.

A man with a violin? A god rather, with an instrument touched and tuned by hands immortal.

So the people thought.

Suddenly the violin slid from the musician's shoulder, his hand, still grasping the bow, went up to his forehead, and his dark eyes, full of an expression of pain, were raised to the faces of those about him.

They knew the signs too well. Far too familiar were his movements and his looks.

"He has the fever," they say pityingly.

"Take me home," were his words, as he held out a card on which were written his own name and the name of the home of Leolin; a card which he has carried through all those weeks of horror for a possible emergency like this.

To him, as to the priest, that place of sheltering

greenness, where the roses bloomed so thickly, and through whose garden-ways a white-clad woman came to give him welcome, was home.

A carriage was standing at the door. Its owner assisted him to enter it, and the driver was given the directions on the card.

Moonlight has succeeded sunset, and lies in a mellow flood on the floor of the room where the artist sits beside her friend. Before the nightingale shall have given place to the lark the fever will have claimed its most conspicuous victim, and Carloné will have given his life as a thank-offering for the fair things of his existence.

They both know that death is near.

"Is there anything you would say, aught that you would ask?" are the words of Leolin, as she holds his hot hand in both her own.

"Dear Love," the answer comes, "it cannot matter now if I say that which has long been in my heart. I have loved you since those first days when we floated together in the little boat at home. I used to think before I realized that you were so far removed by your genius from other women, that should I ever win a name worthy to become yours that I would try to woo you as my wife, but when I saw you as you are, fitted for the winning of immortal fame, the wearing of eternal honors, I loved you well enough to forbid myself to speak of love, and to be your friend. But now may I ask, Dear, that if marriage had been for you, might I as well as another, have hoped to be your husband?"

"Better, far better, friend of mine," was the low reply.

She stooped and kissed him on the lips.

"Father Alpheus? Has he come home? Is he safe?" asked the musician when the dawn had begun to redden the east.

"He has come home, he is safe," was the artist's reply to the half-delirious question.

She did not tell him that in another chamber the priest was safe in the safety of death.

In the early morning of the previous day, after Carloné had gone forth, Father Alpheus had come home and lain down like one who had succumbed to disease than as one whose earthly work is done, and who goes readily forth to meet new work in a new world.

"You still see the Christ? You will paint the picture?"

These were the priest's dying words.

"Ah, yes," his daughter had answered, "I see Him still. I shall surely paint the picture."

In his wasted hand he tightly held the stems of some withered flowers, and all about him was the pervasive, penetrating odor which was to him the perfume of love and of power.

XXVIII.

FINE ISSUES.

Spirits are not finely touched
But to fine issues. —SHAKESPEARE.

“A just judgment, a wise decision. I thank you.”

Had he hoped his fetters would be removed? Had he feared his sheltering bands would be broken? Of what had he dreamed, of what been afraid, during the night hours when no sleep would come, and his mind had been busy with one thing?

Leolin had been ten years in Rome. Ten years had she been true in every fiber of her being, every beat of her heart to that vow made in the New England forest. Too true? Ah, Heaven, was *he* untrue that he could almost wish that she had been less faithful?

“A just judgment, a wise decision. I thank you.”

The voice of the artist was a little unnatural, somewhat hoarse.

Two men who were acknowledged the best judges of painting in Rome, had stood long before the two pictures of which Vancourt had asked, nay, demanded, an honest opinion as to which was the better.

Ten years.

On one condition was his pupil free to wed; not

an easy condition, but could not he, with his latest production before him, deem it one possible to be met?

This had been his thought as he had put by his brush on the last day of the thousands which had gone to make up those ten years.

On that afternoon his pupil had sent him as a thank-offering and a memorial gift, her own latest picture, which she had never shown him in process.

"I will be just, I will be just."

He had repeated the words many times during the stillness of that last night.

Side by side in his studio the two newly finished pictures hung. He placed them in his exhibition room, and the multitudes who poured in to examine them pronounced them the most wonderful paintings which had been seen in Rome since an old master touched brush to canvas.

Vancourt's is the larger canvas, and before it the beholder is held silent by wonder, thrilled by awe, paralyzed by something akin to terror.

He sees the dead Christ as the artist saw him. The blinding horror of the scene pierces him like a knife-thrust as it grows for him to its full meaning. The blackness of inky night hovers close around the rude cross on which hangs the lonely figure. The agony of death is fixed in the Divine Face around which is blowing the wild, flowing hair. The awfulness of the deed rushes with crushing force upon the gazer. He is numb with the terribleness of the tragedy. He cannot weep or think; he can only stand, fixed as a statue, and realize. Absolutely true is the drawing, masterly the

shading, exquisite every detail, but the mind takes no note of line or color or texture; the conception is all-absorbing.

But what is this Vision to which the beholder lifts eyes still filled with that palpitating horror? The murky darkness is followed by undulating vapors of soft, caressing grayness and glimpses of blue. There was gloom; here is glory. There was torture; here is triumph. There was the many-spiked circlet of thorns; here is the crown of melting, myriad-hued stars. There was prostration; here is power. There was brutality; here is beauty. Vanquishment is replaced by victory. Horror has been exchanged for harmony. There was the emptiness of death; here is fulness of life.

Who is this Incarnation of Radiance, this Expression of Might, this Embodiment of Tenderness?

Here is unwavering strength of execution, faultless symmetry, wondrous grace, marvelous coloring, but to these the beholder gives no thought; he simply feels. He is drowned in emotion, submerged in sensation. He looks into the searching eyes with the smile of God within them, and thrills as their gaze answers his own. The tenderly masterful lips seem about to open in speech.

Who is this Wondrous Being?

Every nerve answers to a thought like unto that which had come to a watcher in pallid land and to the girl-artist in her studio; which comes slowly, but with entire conviction. With hushed tones and reverent accent are uttered the words:

"It is the Lord. Not the Crucified but the Risen Christ. *It is the King of Glory.*"

Ten years.

On one condition was his pupil free to wed. Could he meet that condition?

This was his thought through the days when multitudes thronged to look upon the two pictures.

Only to one who was a greater artist than herself was she to give her hand in marriage. Should he who framed the vow be the first to ask her to break it?

He loved her. There was no evading the knowledge, no crowding out of his craving for her by devotion to toil, by consecration to his ideal. With all the force of his fiery soul he loved her.

And her latest painting was greater than his own.

Was it greater? He had so decided the first hour it had hung in his studio, but in the long, sleepless night-hours he had told himself that perhaps his fearful heart underestimated his own work, overestimated hers. And again, according to the agreement in the Maine forest, judgment was to be rendered by more than one competent critic.

He would be just—to her and to himself.

And so the judges were summoned, and after a deliberate, critical examination of every detail of the two pictures, the spokesman had pronounced the opinion of the two.

"Entirely admirable as are both paintings, we must, in view of its unique conception and unusual handling combined with the perfect finish of every minutest part, give to this our preference."

The artist, rigid yet trembling, had turned to see the hand of the judge resting—upon the painting of his pupil.

He had pronounced the judgment just, the decision wise, and with thanks, courteous if cold, had dismissed the critics.

“Are you content?”

Vancourt asked the question two days after the decision of the judges.

“Content?” said Leolin, a little wonderingly. “I am more than content; I am happy.”

“Do you never think of—marriage?” he asked, looking away from her.

“Marriage! Why think of that?” was the reply. “My life is full. Your brave teaching was also wise. Who shall worthily serve two masters? And then,” half playfully, “whom should I marry? Where is he whose best, according to the kind decision of one whom I accept as my judge, is better than my own? Men call you the greatest painter of your day. If indeed my picture is superior to yours, from whence can I look for my lord?”

A swift, glad light stole into the face of the master. She was true; he had helped to make her so. And she would not go away in the coming time. Art was her mistress, and he surely might be, if not her husband, more to her than any other man. A feeling of relief, of certainty, came to him. For the first time in years he was content.

“We have been master and pupil,” he said, and

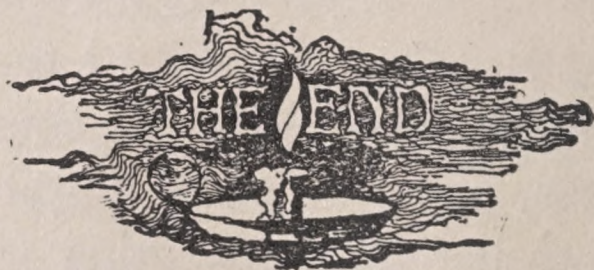
surely no one ever before heard so wistful a note in the tones of the stern, silent painter. "Shall we not be friends, with all the strength of constancy, all the reliance of trusted honor, all the rest of perfect sympathy, in our friendship? I never had a real friend in my life."

"Have one at last," she cried. "I, too, am friendless now. You are good to want me, and, believe me, I am not ungrateful, or unmindful of the honor you do me. I will prove it, indeed I will prove it! Ah! we will be so happy through all the years—my friend!"

"They call him the Painter of Power," said a traveler who in one of Rome's galleries had lingered long before one of the greatest of modern masterpieces. "Surely the name is well chosen."

"Well chosen, indeed," replied the speaker's companion. "But look you here. May two souls, think you, reappear in one body? Raphael, the Master of Color and of Tenderness, and Del Sarto, the "Faultless Painter," seem united here."

For many minutes he had been gazing at the star-crowned Christ.



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